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DECEMBER 2003

WORLD SOCCER comment

FIFTY years ago this month, Hungary came, saw and conquered England at Wembley. The 6-3 scoreline is etched on the collective memory of English football – "the match that changed the game", a result that called for horizons to be broadened and fostered a new thinking that helped to make the launch of *World Soccer* possible in 1960.

And yet, half a century later, are we any nearer acceptance of the reality that England are no longer masters of the game they invented? Probably not, but who cares when we have the crash, bang, wallop of the Premiership to silence the doubters?

Insularity rules. Next month's World Club Cup Final is a case in point. The match, between Boca Juniors and Milan in Yokohama, will go unreported by the vast majority of the UK media. A great shame, because the annual meeting between the club champions of South America and Europe offers a fascinating insight into the state of the global game.

It may only be a one-off encounter, but the World Club Cup highlights one of the great divisions of modern football. On the one hand, the wealth and power of Europe; on the other, the promise and ambition of South America.

The one-way traffic of talent from South America to Europe means that the lines are becoming increasingly blurred. The presence of Rivaldo (page 26) and Kaka (page 28) – symbols of the past and future glories of Brazil – in Milan's squad is a clear acknowledgment of that. Yet if Boca win in Yokohama – and the South American teams tend to take the fixture more seriously than their European counterparts – South American football will take heart that all is not lost.

Next year will be dominated by the European game, and especially the finals of Euro 2004 in Portugal. But that doesn't mean that we cannot celebrate talented footballers – wherever they come from.

The Magical Magyars would say amen to that.

Gavin Hamilton, Editor (gavin_hamilton@ipcmedia.com)

*** **SAVE MONEY ON WORLD SOCCER** SEE OUR SPECIAL SUBSCRIPTION OFFER ON PAGE 72

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CRUZE CONTROL
BRAZIL: Long-time leaders Cruzeiro are the favourites to win the national championship. Page 22

Women's World Cup
UNITED STATES: Germany were crowned women's world champions after beating Sweden 2-1 in the Final. **Page 54**

Euro 2004 play-offs
The last five places for Euro 2004 will be decided this month with the following play-offs over two legs: Croatia-Slovenia, Latvia-Turkey, Spain-Norway, Russia-Wales and Scotland-Holland. **Page 9**

Kezman kidnap plot foiled
HOLLAND: Dutch police scotched a plan to hold PSV Eindhoven's Serbian striker to ransom. **Page 58**

Toppi returns
GERMANY: Klaus Toppmoller, former coach of Bayer Leverkusen, is back on the Bundesliga front line after being hired by Hamburg. **Page 21**

***Non* to Barthez**
FRANCE: Marseille's bid to take the national team keeper on loan from Manchester United has been ruled out by FIFA. **Page 20**

LOVELY BUBBLY FOR CSKA
RUSSIA: CSKA Moscow celebrated winning their first Russian League title by draining 30 bottles of sparkling red wine in their dressing-room. **Page 64**

First blood to Al Ain
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: Al Ain have won the inaugural Asian Champions League after beating Thailand's BEC Tero Sasana over two legs in the Final. **Page 70**

Congestion charge
ARGENTINA: Boca Juniors face a gruelling fixture programme as they prepare to play Milan in the World Club Cup Final in Yokohama, Japan. **Page 30**

COACHES UNDER FIRE
SPAIN: While Gregorio Manzano's Atletico Madrid have turned the corner, Javier Clemente is the latest casualty of the managerial cull in La Liga. **Page 16**

The long goodbye
ITALY: After months of speculation, Hector Cuper has been dismissed as coach of Internazionale. **Page 18**

Ready on time

Everything is in place ahead of the draw for the biggest sporting event ever to be held in Portugal

PEDRO PINTO in Lisbon

ON OCTOBER 25, the football faithful of Lisbon flocked to their new 'Cathedral', the name given to the venue that will host the Final match of Euro 2004 next summer. Some 65,000 people packed the new Stadium of Light, which, like many other venues, is already prepared to receive the biggest sporting event ever to be held in Portugal.

Many sceptics doubted Portugal's ability to stage the European Championship properly following the announcement in 1999 that the country, outsiders in the bidding process, had been chosen as hosts. It was the mission of tournament director Antonio Laranjo and his organising committee to prove the opposite.

"We all knew the task of building 10 stadiums was a daunting one, especially considering that in most cases they had to be built from scratch. But with the co-operation of the government, the clubs, the stadium officials and the construction companies, we will easily be able to accomplish that feat."

The stadiums, of which seven are completely new, will cost a total of £285million, a figure the majority of the Portuguese public believes can only deepen the country's economic woes. Laranjo understands the population's preoccupation, which has been well documented, but offers a robust defence.

He says: "Of course we are making a sizeable investment to ensure that this tournament will be a success, but what people have to realise is that it will undoubtedly pay dividends in the near future. The critics believe that the money spent on the stadiums could have been better allocated to satisfy other social needs, but these structures will be used for more than football and will aid in the development of certain neighbourhoods that would otherwise never have had the opportunity to grow.

"Furthermore, this event will allow Portugal to show itself to the rest of the world. We are expecting the increase in tourism to be higher than the 16 per cent registered during Expo 98. That will help the country recoup a lot, if not all, of the money spent."

Currently, the organising committee's largest concern is security. Portugal will open its doors to hundreds of thousands of football fans, including some who could cause their share of trouble.

Space-age arena...the new Stadium of Light in Lisbon

'Fears of potential incompetence have proved unjustified'

Laranjo says: "We all know that if a football supporter encounters problems in accessing a stadium, in acquiring a ticket, in parking a car, there is a high probability that he will become frustrated and even violent. What the organising committee has been trying to ensure, in association with the ministry of the interior and other state agencies, is that the country is ready to cope with the people who will invade our country. Our primary concern is the safety of the football fans, and to have the necessary resources to ensure that the football fan will not have to worry about security flaws."

Along with the fans will come the media – a battalion some 9,000 strong, armed with pens, paper, cameras and microphones. A preoccupation of Antonio Florencio, the tournament's chief press officer, is to make sure that all the stadium facilities are exceptional.

Catering for the media

Florencio says: "All the new stadiums are equipped with state-of-the-art equipment which will allow the media to perform at the highest level. For example, behind every goal we have set up 25 internet connections that will enable photographers to send their pictures to their respective agencies almost instantaneously.

"At the new Stadium of Light, venue for the Final, there are 1,000 places for the written press, 135 commentary positions and a press conference room that can easily welcome 800 journalists. So, we are convinced that Portugal has all the conditions necessary to organise the best ever European Championship – for the media, as well as the fans."

Fans in Portugal have been the luckiest of all, becoming the first to sample the new stadiums and conditions. So far, attendances have risen at every club to have inaugurated a new venue. In Lisbon, Sporting, a club attracting an average of fewer than 10,000 fans per game at the old Jose Alvalade stadium, now draw at least 25,000 for League matches.

It would be fair to say that seven months before the big kick-off, Portugal is well on the way to being ready for it. Recently, the chairman of UEFA's stadium and security commission, Ernie Walker, said he was "ecstatic" with the progress made throughout the country.

The fears expressed by many about Portugal's potential incompetence when it came to hosting an event of this importance have proved unjustified.

Pedro Pinto will be hosting the televised draw for the finals of Euro 2004 on November 30

THE STADIUMS

Estadio Afonso Henriques, Guimaraes

Aveiro
Estadio Municipal, capacity 30,000.
Brand new construction. Home team: Beira Mar. Will host two group matches.

Braga
Estadio Municipal, 30,000.
Brand new stadium located on the Monte Castro hillside. Home team: Sporting Braga. Will host two group matches.

Estadio Algarve, Faro

Coimbra
Estadio Municipal, 30,000.
Remodelling of existing stadium. Home team: Academica. Will host two group matches.

Faro
Estadio Algarve, 30,000.
Brand new stadium. Will host two group matches and one quarter-final.

Guimaraes
Estadio Afonso Henriques, 30,000.
Remodelling of existing stadium. Home team: Vitoria Guimaraes. Will host two group matches.

Leiria
Estadio Dr Magalhaes Pessoa, 30,000.
Rebuilding of existing stadium to increase capacity from 11,000. Home team: Uniao Leiria. Will host two group matches.

Lisbon, Benfica
Estadio da Luz, 65,000.
A brand new stadium built next door to the old Stadium of Light. Home team: Benfica. Will host three group games, one quarter-final and the Final.

Lisbon, Sporting
Estadio Jose Alvalade, 52,000.
New construction next to the old stadium. Home team: Sporting Lisbon. Will host three group games, one quarter-final and one semi-final.

Oporto, FC Porto
Estadio Dragao, 52,000.
Another brand new stadium built adjacent to the old Estadio das Antas. Home team: FC Porto. Will host three group games, including the Opening Match, one quarter-final and one semi-final.

Oporto, Boavista
Estadio do Bessa, 30,000.
Existing stadium has been rebuilt, with four new seating sections. Home team: Boavista. Will host three group matches.

Estadio do Bessa, Oporto

Final showdown

Gavin Hamilton on the countries preparing for Portugal

PORTUGAL, THE HOSTS, France, the reigning European champions, and the Czech Republic and Sweden, the two best-performing teams in the qualifiers, will be the top seeds in UEFA's draw for the Euro 2004 finals.

England and Italy, the teams with the next best qualification records, are likely to be second seeds, along with Spain and Turkey – assuming they qualify through the play-offs.

That would leave Germany, last year's World Cup finalists, in the third pot of seeds. Coach Rudi Voller is not happy with the situation. "We were World Cup runners-up a year ago and we were the top European team there," Voller complained. "I wish that this success counted for more."

The finals draw takes place on Sunday, November 30, in Lisbon.

Under-21 star...Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo

THE TEAMS

Portugal
Coach:
Luiz Felipe Scolari
Expectations are high as Portugal host their first major tournament. The disappointment of last year's World Cup and indiscipline of the semi-final exit to France at Euro 2000 have not been forgotten. But of more concern to coach Scolari will be the integration of the crop of outstanding Under-21 players, led by Cristiano Ronaldo and Ricardo Quaresma, with the established names like Luis Figo and Rui Costa.

Bulgaria
Coach:
Plamen Markov
Winners of a tight group ahead of Croatia and Belgium, Bulgaria's fortunes have been turned around by unheralded coach Markov. The players are dotted around Europe, with key figures in Germany – midfielder Martin Petrov at Wolfsburg and striker Dimitar Berbatov at Leverkusen. But only Kyiv Dynamo's Georgi Peev is playing Champions League football. Other concerns are the retirement of playmaker Krassimir Balakov and the long-term injury to forward Svetoslav Todorov.

Czech Republic
Coach: Karel Bruckner
Again seen as the dark horses after an unbeaten qualifying campaign, they are driven by outstanding captain Pavel Nedved, who is augmented by talented midfielder Tomas Rosicky and strikers Jan Koller and Milan Baros.

Unbeaten...Czechs

New names have been added since the first-round exit in Euro 2000, while only a handful (Nedved, Karel Poborsky, Vladimir Smicer) remain from the team that reached the Final of Euro 96.

Favourites...France

Denmark
Coach:
Morten Olsen
Still smarting from the defeat by England at last summer's World Cup, the Danes could prove a handful with their simple, stylish game. But a repeat of the extraordinary 1992 triumph is unlikely. Key first-choice figures such as Dennis Rommedahl, Jesper Gronkjaer and Jon Dahl Tomasson could be joined by Under-21 players.

England
Coach:
Sven Goran Eriksson
Qualifying proved testing at times, both on and off the pitch, with hooligan problems pushing UEFA to the brink of excluding England from the finals. On their day, David Beckham, Michael Owen, Steven Gerrard and Paul Scholes – augmented by the outstanding Wayne Rooney – can compete with the world's best. Doubts remain over coach Eriksson's tactical flexibility and Rio Ferdinand's availability pending a decision over his missed drugs test. However, John Terry was a capable deputy away to Turkey.

France
Coach:
Jacques Santini
After the disappointment of the 2002 World Cup, the reigning European champions sailed through qualifying under new coach Santini – though they were in arguably the weakest group. Most of the class of 2002 remain, though some have dropped out (Emmanuel Petit, Christophe Dugarry), allowing in new faces – William Gallas and Philippe Mexes in defence, Benoit Pedretti and Ludovic Giuly in midfield, Sidney Govou in attack. The biggest concern is keeper Fabien Barthez's lack of match action.

Germany
Coach: Rudi Voller
The 2002 World Cup finalists struggled at times in their qualifying group, but found their stride in time to qualify automatically ahead of Scotland. Voller's men remain over-dependent on Bayern midfielder Michael Ballack, but have at least discovered new options in attack, notably Stuttgart's Kevin Kuranyi and a revived Fredi Bobic.

Greece
Coach:
Otto Rehhagel
Having qualified for their first European finals for 24 years, Greece now face the challenge of putting in a respectable performance in Portugal. German coach Rehhagel has moulded a tight team who finished ahead of Spain and Ukraine in qualifying, despite scoring only eight goals. In Angelos Haristeas of Werder Bremen and Demis Nikolaidis of Atletico Madrid, Rehhagel has interesting striking options, as well as a talented midfielder in Vassilis Tsartas.

Forward option...Vieri

Italy
Coach:
Giovanni Trapattoni
The *Azzurri* rode out the storm that followed 2002 World Cup failure and disappointing results early in the qualifying campaign to finish with a flourish. They demolished Wales in Milan with an outstanding display of attacking football that went against all the stereotypes of Italian football. Alessandro Nesta has proved a fine successor to Paolo Maldini in defence, and Italy remain fiercely competitive in midfield. In attack, Trapattoni has plenty of options, led by Francesco Totti, Alessandro Del Piero, Christian Vieri and Filippo Inzaghi.

Sweden
Coaches:
Lars Lagerback & Tommy Soderberg
The Swedes were never seriously troubled as they qualified for their third successive major finals. Their traditional 'qualities' of resilience and endurance remain key factors, but in emerging, unpredictable striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic, they have a player capable of illuminating any tournament.

Switzerland
Coach: Kobi Kuhn
Swiss coach Kuhn appeared for his country at the 1966 World Cup, when he was memorably described as playing with "honey in his boots". The current Swiss side may not be quite as refined, but in Hakan Yakin, they have a gifted forward/playmaker.

THE PLAY-OFFS

Potential starter...Holland striker Kluivert

Croatia-Slovenia
Croatia edged Belgium out of second place in qualifying by beating Bulgaria in their final match. Coach Otto Baric has introduced new faces – young Dinamo Zagreb forward Niko Kranjcar has been called up to face Slovenia – but Liverpool's Igor Biscan "will never play again", Baric says, after storming out of the training camp before the Bulgaria game; Jurica Vranjes of Stuttgart is injured.

For Slovenia, coach Bojan Prasnikar has named an experienced squad, with the onus again falling on midfielder Zlatko Zahovic.

Latvia-Turkey
Latvia were one of the surprise teams of the qualifiers, sneaking past Poland after beating already-qualified Sweden in their last group game. Marian Pahars, who has not played for 12 months, was included in Latvia's squad but is unlikely to be at anything close to full fitness.

Turkey, who gave a nervous and fitful performance against England in Istanbul, will be the overwhelming favourites.

Spain-Norway
The Spanish have not missed out on a major tournament since Euro 92. With players such as Raul, Joaquin, Ivan Helguera and the emerging Jose Antonio Reyes, they should have the quality to see off Norway. The attacking axis of Juan Carlos Valeron and Raul will be crucial.

Norway included six players from champions Rosenborg, but will miss Ole Gunnar Solskjaer (injured) and John Carew, omitted after his widely-publicised bust-up with John Arne Riise.

Russia-Wales
New Russia coach Georgi Yartsev has recalled Dmitri Alenichev, Alexander Mostovoi and Yegor Titov, while Valeri Esipov is back after a nine-year absence. But it is his young strikers Dmitri Bulykin (see Talent Scout, page 77) and Dmitri Sychev who have impressed most.

For Wales, manager Mark Hughes has included Simon Davies, Robbie Savage, Mark Pembridge and Robert Page in his squad, despite having injury concerns over all four. Craig Bellamy definitely misses out after suffering further complications with a knee injury.

Scotland-Holland
The emergence of Darren Fletcher and James McFadden (see feature, page 36) has given Scotland's German coach Berti Vogts hope for the future, but the Dutch, coached by former Rangers boss Dick Advocaat, will be a tough proposition. In addition, the Scots will be without injured captain Paul Lambert.

Advocaat dropped Ruud Van Nistelrooy from the Dutch squad that played Moldova in October, a punishment for his behaviour when subbed during the 3-1 defeat by the Czech Republic. It remains to be seen whether the Manchester United striker will be reinstated, or whether Advocaat will use his other attacking options, which include Patrick Kluivert, Roy Makaay, Pierre Van Hooijdonk and Rafael Van der Vaart.

Scotland are drawn with Holland in the Euro 2004 play-offs
13/10/03

Genclerbirligi take the plaudits at Ewood Park after their 4-2 aggregate win over Blackburn Rovers in the UEFA Cup
15/10/03

Borussia Dortmund see off Austria Wien in their UEFA Cup encounter
15/10/03

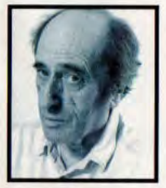
Schalke scrape through against Kamen Ingrad of Croatia, winning 1-0 on aggregate
16/10/03

Real Madrid beat Celta Vigo 2-0 away in La Liga
18/10/03

Milan keep their unbeaten League record with a 1-0 win over Lazio
19/10/03

Antonio Cassano celebrates his goal in Roma's 2-0 home defeat of Parma
19/10/03

WS WORLD SOCCER Brian Glanville



...on political correctness in Dublin...rugby's violent tendencies...Gary Neville, shop steward...poor European performances by Premiership sides

A GOOD MANY years ago now, I wrote a short story called *Black Magic*. It was narrated by a bigoted soccer coach who could see no merit in a black player. For him, as indeed for so many misguided coaches and managers of that time, black players – ludicrously – were "cowards", whom you'd never see on a cold winter's night in Middlesbrough.

The tale was published in the old *Evening News*, then, to my great satisfaction, in a leading black magazine which had plainly taken the point. Not long after that, I received a death threat from some wretched neo-Nazi organisation for my support of black players.

More recently, when talented playmaker Paul Davis was having trouble with Arsenal – manager George Graham wouldn't put him in the team yet seemed unwilling to transfer him – it was to me that Davis turned for help. I invited him to tea and together we devised a column for *The People* that Sunday. The following Saturday he was back in the team, flourished at Ipswich, kept his place, and played in Wembley finals.

When our mutual friend Paul Elliott sued Dean Saunders over a challenge that had ended his career, I found him his lawyers, read every witness statement and gave evidence in court. Hardly, you might think, the track record of a racist.

So I was astonished by the outraged response, the absurd accusations, after an interview I'd given on Irish radio. Talking of the problems of young black players, I reiterated the sociological surveys that emphasised the phenomenon of the missing father, the mother forced to go out to work, leaving the child with carers, who, obliged to look after several charges, gave little time to individuals. Which led in turn to scant education of boys who might, in rare cases, find themselves earning £45,000 a week as star footballers.

All this was said in a spirit of sympathy rather than criticism, but we live, alas, in the age of Political Correctness, that cancer which distorts truth and objectivity, achieving the very reverse of what it desires. Statistically, 49 per cent of British black children, 21 per cent of white, come from broken homes.

A Liberal Democrat MP, mounting the bandwagon, accused me of being "grossly offensive", adding mindlessly that there are "good and bad people from all walks of life". Aside from this banality, who has spoken of "bad people"?

A woman from the Professional Footballers' Association burbled about young black players not being any less educated than young white players. Who had said they were?

And a woman from Kick It Out – the campaign against racism in football – with whose aims I totally agree, made the demented accusation that I was verging on "incitement to racial hatred".

Then there was the bird-brained reaction in Dublin, my father's city and one for which I've always had the greatest affection. The deluded idiot who writes the Limelight column in the *Sunday Tribune* thought I was dead. Surpassing himself, he condemned me as "a throwback to the old days of hang 'em and flog 'em Toryism".

An equally grotesque columnist, one Malachy Clerkin, declared: "Glanville's accent is too clipped and too plummy by half, and he never seems more than a sentence away from calling for the birch to be brought back." My father, by the way, always spoke with a strong Dublin brogue!

As an old-fashioned liberal, rather than a Tory, implacably opposed to capital or any form of corporal punishment, I can only wonder how these people can reach such daft conclusions. And this from the city of Bernard Shaw, W B Yeats, Oscar Wilde and Sean O'Casey.

'I hardly have the track record of a racist, yet I have virtually been accused of incitement to racial hatred'

THE recent West End escapades of certain young footballers has provoked the fatuous reaction, in some quarters, that rugby is by far the morally superior game, one whose players could give lessons to soccer.

What hypocritical garbage, but then hypocrisy has characterised rugby for generations. Brutal things, largely ignored, occur on the field of play – punching, kicking, eye-gouging and squeezing of the testicles – that far surpass anything that happens in soccer.

In 1924, the New Zealanders were incensed when one of their players, Brownie, was sent off against England at Twickenham. They never spoke again to the referee, and not for decades would another player be sent off in an international match. Can we really believe that none deserved it?

Last season the South Africans, long noted for their violence, surpassed themselves at Twickenham in their shameful treatment of England. It was surely a pot and kettle affair when the South African captain, Corne Krige, called England's Martin Johnson a dirty player a few days before the teams met in the World Cup in Australia.

During that match, England's Lawrence Dallaglio punched South African opponent Thinus Delport, who needed five stitches. Punishment? None.

And the tournament wasn't far advanced when Namibia coach Dave Waterston furiously accused Ireland's lock, Paul O'Connell, of stamping on his player, Archie Graham.

The very idea that rugby can or ever will supersede soccer as Britain's favourite sport is just laughable.

HAVING helped to make peace between the FA and England's foolishly recalcitrant boycott-threatening players over the Rio Ferdinand affair, David Beckham spoiled it by fatuously dedicating the 0-0 draw against Turkey and consequent qualification for Euro 2004 to...Ferdinand.

'David Beckham dedicated England's draw in Turkey to Rio Ferdinand, but the defender deserved nothing of the sort'

The Manchester United centre-back deserved nothing of the sort. Either guilty or incredibly stupid in the drug-test affair, his absence in Istanbul if anything positively contributed to England's result. John Terry, who took his place, was exemplary, where Ferdinand, playing for United in Stuttgart in the Champions League, had just given away a ghastly goal.

It was equally absurd that Gary Neville, one of nature's shop stewards, having stupidly shouted the odds at the Sopwell House Hotel, should reiterate his mistaken views after the match in a ghosted column. In the event, the England players got the very worst of both worlds.

Willing to wound and yet afraid to strike, you might well say, quite literally. For what did they gain, these foolish fellows, but public condemnation?

AM I the only one who finds the present Premiership such a mediocre affair, its players' colossal rewards in inverse ratio to the football they play?

Not only are so many of the games one sees dull, uninventive, lacking in tactical and technical flair, but look what happens to Premiership teams when they play Champions League football. Arsenal gave a pathetic display at home to Inter, who then went on to fare so poorly that they sacked their coach Hector Cuper.

Arsenal also went down to Kyiv Dynamo, showing minimal invention, which always seems the case when Dennis Bergkamp doesn't play.

Chelsea may have squeezed home against Lazio at Stamford Bridge but were abysmal – not least thanks to manager Claudio Ranieri's blunders – against Besiktas in their previous game.

Manchester United crashed in Stuttgart and gave Rangers far too many chances at Ibrox, even if they did win 1-0.

Liverpool totter from one disappointing performance to another, which makes you wonder how long Gerard Houllier, deserving sympathy for his fearful heart operation, can continue to promise there are better times ahead.

Read Brian Glanville's weekly column at www.worldsoccer.com

Notes & quotes

"I'm so disappointed. Both our preparation and performance was catastrophic."
Michael Nees, the German coach of the Seychelles national team, fails to find any positives in the wake of a 4-0 home defeat by Zambia in a World Cup qualifier.

"It was a disguised sacking."
Bordeaux coach Elie Baup evaluates his 'promotion' to the role of director of football at the club after his team's poor start to the season.

Booted upstairs...Elie Baup

"When a player goes out to a disco on a Thursday night, he is not showing his team-mates enough respect."
Bayern Munich's French full-back Willy Sagnol calls for a more professional approach from certain unnamed club colleagues.

"Moratti and players, shame on you."
Internazionale fans spell out their discontent with their president and team on a banner spotted at the San Siro for the visit of Roma.

Alberto Zaccheroni is appointed as the new coach of Inter
20/10/03

Arsenal's poor form in the UEFA Champions League continues when they are beaten 2-1 by Kyiv Dynamo in Ukraine
21/10/03

Marco Di Vaio celebrates his second goal in Juventus's 4-2 defeat of Real Sociedad
21/10/03

Ajax go top of their Champions League group after a 1-0 win over Celta Vigo
22/10/03

Frank Lampard scores Chelsea's equaliser in the 2-1 defeat of Lazio at Stamford Bridge
22/10/03

Manchester United secure a comfortable 1-0 win over Rangers in Glasgow
22/10/03

Deportivo go top in Spain after a 2-1 defeat of Valencia
25/10/03

WS WORLD SOCCER Paul Gardner

140 years of the offside rule...and still defenders get favourable treatment

THE TASKS OF rewriting and clarifying the offside rule have been going on longer than anyone now alive can recall.

A version of the offside rule has been with us from the beginning – it was in the original 1863 'Laws' promulgated by the newly-formed Football Association. But it evidently caused confusion, and in 1886 the FA issued the first of a long list of official clarifications. Its patronising tone leaves one in no doubt they were totally satisfied with the rule as written – the implication being the players were too dumb to grasp the concept:

"If players would always remember that when they are behind the ball, at the moment of kicking or throwing, they *cannot* be offside, but that when they are in front of the ball they are always *liable* to be offside, it would simplify the reading of this Law."

By 1891 the International Board had taken over the rules, and another clarification was thought necessary. So it has gone on, for over 100 years, right down to last month, when FIFA issued a "more detailed interpretation" – this one addressed to referees, not players.

This latest effort attempts to sharply define the tricky phrases "interfering with play" and "gaining an advantage".

Slowly – oh, these things move so slowly whenever the International Board is involved – a more workable rule has evolved. But the failing of the latest memorandum is that it leaves too much unsaid. Indeed, it does not tackle the biggest offside problem at all.

I refer to the much more basic task of getting apparently straightforward offside decisions correct. I venture that it is impossible – after 140 years of experience with the offside rule – to watch any match, at any level, in any country, without seeing at least one dubious, bad or plain atrocious offside decision.

Is the rule simply impossible to apply with consistent accuracy? A study carried out some years ago in Spain suggested this was the case – that on long passes, it was physiologically impossible for anyone's eyes to simultaneously register both passer and recipient, so that errors were inevitable.

Television replays have exposed the problem. We now know, with certainty, that players who look yards offside when they get the ball may well not be, especially in cases where their opponents are moving up to trap them.

As a criticism of the offside rule *per se*, that evidence is fairly convincing. But it is effectively undermined by the fact that many bad decisions do not involve long passes, but occur in confined situations where passer and recipient may be no more than a few yards apart.

'It is impossible to watch any match, at any level, without seeing one dubious, bad or plain atrocious offside decision'

And it is difficult to dismiss entirely the notion that linesmen and referees favour defenders. The 1990 change in the rule, mandating that attackers in line with the last defender were onside (where previously they'd been offside) should have meant all the borderline calls would now go against the defenders.

If that is what has happened, I must be missing something. My own eyes tell me otherwise, that despite yet more 'interpretations' from FIFA on this point, the flags are still fluttering much more than they ought to.

There seems little hope of matters improving. Television replays would, of course, solve the problem – but at the expense of innumerable and insufferable game delays. And FIFA has repeatedly insisted it will never countenance such 'aids' to refereeing.

In 2000 a Belgian inventor came up with an electronic offside detector which he claimed was infallible. A machine called the offsides and immediately alerted the linesman. FIFA, though, talked negatively of prohibitive cost, and of the vital human element in which players – and, yes, referees – made mistakes. Nothing more has been heard of the infallible electronic offside detector.

No doubt we shall continue to hear plenty of the fallible human offside detector. It would be nice to know if the fallibility is his, or whether it's built into the rule he's trying to get right. I suspect both factors contribute.

But, really, how difficult would it be for referees and their assistants to start favouring attackers? They would be doing exactly what the latest FIFA memorandum states as its aim – "to protect attacking play intended to lead to a goal, the ultimate objective in football".

ESM EUROPEAN SPORTS MAGAZINES – TEAM OF THE MONTH – OCTOBER 2003

La Gazzetta dello Sport · don balon · kicker · Sport-Express · Foot Magazine · World Soccer · A Bola · Voetbal International · Fanatik · Tips Bladet

HOW THEY VOTED

A BOLA (POR)
Hildebrand (Stuttgart); Michel Salgado (Real Madrid), Jorge Andrade (Dep La Coruna), Tudor (Juventus), Roberto Carlos (Real Madrid); Beckham (Real Madrid), Kaka (Milan), Deco (FC Porto), Nedved (Juventus); Di Vaio (Juventus), Henry (Arsenal)

DON BALON (SPA)
Hildebrand (Stuttgart); Michel Salgado (Real Madrid), Jorge Andrade (Dep La Coruna), Bridge (Chelsea); Schneider (Bayer Leverkusen), Giuly (Monaco), Ronaldinho (Barcelona), Nedved (Juventus); Ailton (Werder Bremen), Drogba (Marseille), Shevchenko (Milan)

FANATIK (TUR)
Dida (Milan); G Neville (Manchester United), Chivu (Roma), Roberto Carlos (Real Madrid); Nedved (Juventus), Deco (FC Porto), Giunti (Besiktas), Kaka (Milan), Giuly (Monaco); Drogba (Marseille), Ailton (Werder Bremen)

FOOT (BLG)
Canizares (Valencia); Nowotny (Bayer Leverkusen), Chivu (Roma), Maldini (Milan); Giuly (Monaco), Totti (Roma), Buffel (Feyenoord), Nedved (Juventus); Shearer (Newcastle), Ronaldo (Real Madrid), Ailton (Werder Bremen)

GAZZETTA DELLO SPORT (ITA)
Hildebrand (Stuttgart); Michel Salgado (Real Madrid), Terry (Chelsea), Maldini (Milan), Roberto Carlos (Real Madrid); Deisler (Bayern Munich), Baraja (Valencia), Kaka (Milan), De Rossi (Roma), Nedved (Juventus); Drogba (Marseille)

KICKER (GER)
Hildebrand (Stuttgart); Kompany (Anderlecht), Campbell (Arsenal), Bordon (Stuttgart); Poborsky (Sparta Prague), Pirlo (Milan), Sergio (Dep La Coruna), Zidane (Real Madrid); Shevchenko (Milan), Ibrahimovic (Ajax), Drogba (Marseille)

SPORT EXPRESS (RUS)
Hildebrand (Stuttgart); Hinkel (Stuttgart), Bordon (Stuttgart), Nesta (Milan), Roberto Carlos (Real Madrid); Giuly (Monaco), Zidane (Real Madrid), Nedved (Juventus), Fran (Dep La Coruna); Drogba (Marseille), Shevchenko (Milan)

TIPS-BLADET (DEN)
Hildebrand (Stuttgart); Terry (Chelsea), Nesta (Milan), Jorge Andrade (Dep La Coruna); De Rossi (Roma), Soldo (Stuttgart), Albelda (Valencia), Nedved (Juventus); Ibrahimovic (Ajax), Shearer (Newcastle), Shevchenko (Milan)

VOETBAL INTERNATIONAL (HOL)
Hildebrand (Stuttgart); Terry (Chelsea), Kompany (Anderlecht), Zambrotta (Juventus); Dindane (Anderlecht), Deco (FC Porto), Ballack (Bayern Munich), Nedved (Juventus); Drogba (Marseille), Makaay (Bayern Munich), Shevchenko (Milan)

WORLD SOCCER (UK)
Hildebrand (Stuttgart); Juan (Bayer Leverkusen), Jorge Andrade (Dep La Coruna), Fernando Meira (Stuttgart), P Neville (Manchester United); Beckham (Real Madrid), Ronaldinho (Barcelona), Nedved (Juventus), Zidane (Real Madrid); Drogba (Marseille), Raul (Real Madrid)

Notes & quotes

"I wasn't trying to attack the referee."
FC Porto midfield star Deco denies aiming a boot at referee Paulo Paraty after being sent off in a Portuguese League game against Boavista.

"I'm in the last year of my contract and am playing for a new deal."
Charlton's South African striker Shaun Bartlett announces his international retirement.

"I'm displeased to be pulled off so often."
Ronaldo shows his frustration at being regularly substituted by Real Madrid coach Carlos Queiroz.

Despairing...Ronaldo

"It might be better if we didn't qualify for Euro 2004. Then we would be forced to introduce much-needed changes in the way we develop young talent."
Stuttgart boss Felix Magath stirs things up in Germany.

WORLD SOCCER/CNN CLUB OF THE MONTH

Juventus	110pts
Milan	95
Real Madrid	91
Deportivo La Coruna	77
Manchester United	61
Stuttgart	47
Cruzeiro	40
FC Porto	20
Marseille	17
Ajax	16

Juventus concede that Edgar Davids could leave the club next summer

28/10/03

Rio Ferdinand is charged by the FA after failing to take part in a random drugs test

29/10/03

Osasuna continue their excellent start to the Spanish League season with a 2-0 win over Real Betis

29/10/03

A FIFA inspection team arrives in South Africa to consider the 2010 World Cup bid

02/11/03

WS WORLD SOCCER **Tim Vickery**

Pride and prejudice in South America

Successful teams help boost the self-esteem of poor nations

AFTER A BRIEF visit to England coincided with the star-studded start of the Premiership, going back to South America was something of a downer. The next eight games I went to in Brazil had a combined attendance of 35,000.

Fair enough, the last Argentinian championship had the highest average crowd for seven years – but that was only just above 7,000. And I'm writing this after coming away from a game in Colombia that attracted fewer than 10,000.

How can this be squared with the popular perception of South America as football crazy? Many things about the continent, and especially Brazil, have been mythologised out of all proportion. Football, I would suggest, is not one of them. Indeed, in a perverse way, it could even be the case that the sparse crowds are a reflection of the importance of the game in people's lives.

A number of factors help explain the empty spaces in the stands: widespread poverty, fear of violence, the spectacle devalued by the constant selling of the best players. But despite all this, when the team is winning fans can usually find the means and the motivation to go to the stadium. They are extraordinarily fickle supporters.

From Buenos Aires to Caracas, South America is a continent with a huge problem of self-esteem. All sorts of social and economic problems, many a legacy of colonial days, have combined to weaken minds and spirits.

Not going to the stadium to support a losing side is a form of self-protection, a defence against the Monday morning jibes of neighbours or workmates who follow rival teams.

It is a context that helps explain why the national teams are so important in this part of the world.

Whether it is the World Cup wins of Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay or Ecuador qualifying for the finals for the first time, these are events that capture global attention – in a region that, if noticed at all, normally hits the headlines only for negative reasons.

A glance at a South American team lining up for the national anthem confirms that the faces are representative of the country's racial and social mix – certainly not the case with the most powerful and influential nations. A victory for the national team is a boost to the self-esteem of an entire society.

There are those who argue that the process of globalisation will soon render national teams redundant. But you seldom hear these voices outside the First World. If anything, in the real world the opposite seems to be happening. As some national symbols are lost, people cling tighter to those that remain. Many countries no longer have a national airline, so it is even more important that they have a national team.

Why should Ronaldo only parade his talent in Madrid? September's World Cup qualifier against Ecuador was the first time he had ever played a competitive international on home soil. Some in Europe feel that even this is too much. But imagine how the English public would feel if they never had the chance to see David Beckham.

'As some national symbols are lost, people cling tighter to those that remain. Many countries no longer have a national airline, so it is even more important that they have a national team'

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PlayStation.2

PC DVD ROM

Jesus! Coach keeps job

SID LOWE
in Madrid

Atletico owner Gil sticks with Manzano while other Liga bosses get the chop

THEY SAY THAT patience is a virtue, but most fans and even more chairmen just don't have the time. Spain's *manana, manana* culture may be legendary, but like everywhere else, football results here are demanded immediately, and coaches who don't get them are out almost before they have unpacked the tactics board.

Just 10 games into the season, Jaime Pacheco has been booted out of Mallorca; the axe has come down on Javier Clemente's neck at Espanyol (where he'll be replaced by Luis Fernandez); and the booing Balaidos crowd are not exactly enamoured with Miguel Angel Lotina's Celta Vigo.

At least those coaches actually started the season: winning the League was not enough for Vicente Del Bosque to continue at Real Madrid, nor did an utterly unexpected promotion to the First Division keep Murcia's David Vidal in a job.

So it has come as something of a surprise that there have been no casualties at Atletico Madrid, home of axe-wielding maniac Jesus Gil – the man who has been through 37 coaches since 1987. Especially as they started the season with a single, unimpressive victory in six, scoring just twice (neither from open play) and with returning club legend Diego Simeone struggling and striker Fernando Torres horribly off-form.

Despite all that, Atletico have role-reversed, becoming a model for other clubs, with uncharacteristic patience paying off. Maybe Gil has mellowed. Maybe his departure from the presidency of the club he still owns really does mean he is taking his hands off the wheel, despite allegations that chairman Enrique Cerezo is merely a puppet.

Or maybe Atletico knew that manager Gregorio Manzano would come good. After all, a precedent had been set: last season Manzano's Mallorca began with four successive defeats and went on to win seven on the trot, finish comfortably in mid-table and collect the Copa del Rey.

And so it proved this year. The press were moving in for the kill, but the Atletico boss – a quiet, thoughtful manager and an expert at getting through to his players psychologically – remained unruffled. The lift the team needed came when a brilliant 93rd-minute free-kick from playmaker Jorge gave Atletico a rather fortunate 2-1 victory over Mallorca, coached by Pacheco's replacement, Luis Aragones. After that they enjoyed a 3-1 victory away to Murcia, a 4-0 home thrashing of Real Sociedad and a 2-1 win at Betis.

Four consecutive victories and suddenly Atletico are sixth in the table, and just a point from a Champions League place. The question marks over Simeone's poor form have been erased by moving him to centre-back (although some are anxious about his lack of pace), Gonzalo De los Santos has replaced him in midfield to great effect, confidence is flooding back, Manzano has settled on a first XI and, perhaps most importantly, Torres has found his feet, scoring six goals in three games.

The youngster's form owes much to the introduction of Greek striker Demis Nikolaidis alongside him, with Jorge playing in behind them in place of injured summer signing Ariel Ibagaza. Previously a lone forager chasing aimless balls, Torres now has back-up – a powerful, intelligent striker to play off and take away some of the attention from opposition defenders, plus his best friend supplying the passes. Torres scored a fantastic goal against Betis, leaping almost in slow-motion to strike an acrobatic volley from Jorge's floated pass. De los Santos described it as "incredible, amazing: the goal of the season", while the crowd just rubbed their eyes in shock and awe. "The thing that really struck me," said Torres, "was the silence that came over the stadium, like they weren't sure what had happened."

● Real Madrid's flight to Belgrade for the Champions League game against Partizan left more than an hour late because several players, fans and even journalists forgot their passports and needed emergency documentation. Madrid's previous trips abroad had been to countries signed up to the Schengen agreement, for which a national identity card is sufficient. Serbia is not even in the EU, let alone a signatory to Schengen. Players involved included Guti, Francisco Pavon and Santiago Solari.

Identity crisis...Guti

Breathtaking Ronaldinho

Also leaving fans open-mouthed is Ronaldinho. He has helped Barcelona to fifth place, ahead of Atletico on goal difference. And here is another example of patience: all the talk of crisis and pressure on coach Frank Rijkaard has died away since Barça picked up their first home win of the season at the fifth attempt – 3-0 against Murcia.

Victory was secured with club heavyweights Luis Enrique and Patrick Kluivert on the bench; instead, it was Luis Garcia, Javier Saviola and Ronaldinho who opened up Murcia with quick-fire passing and clever interchanges. Saviola's nimble feet and scurrying runs were especially dangerous. The Argentinian scored the first goal and helped Luis Garcia – who provided real incisiveness – to create the other two, for Xavi and Ronaldinho. But as usual it was the toothy, always-grinning Brazilian who really took the breath away with his contagious enjoyment and awesome, child-like talent. He even played one pinpoint pass with his back.

Four days later Ronaldinho shone again as Barça played out a heart-stopping 3-3 draw at Real Sociedad. "Ronaldinho," cooed the Catalan daily *El Mundo Deportivo,* "is a great, great leader, a luxury; unique, marvellous, incredible.

Swamp fever...Fernando Torres is engulfed by his Atletico Madrid team-mates after his wonder goal in the 2-1 win over Betis

With his passion for football he leads this team, one that so badly needed a reference point to bring the illusion back."

Finally (in every sense of the word), Athletic Bilbao midfielder Carlos Gurpegi has been banned for two years by the Spanish Committee for Sporting Discipline (CEDD) after testing positive for 19-Nandrosterona, a derivative of the banned substance nandrolone, following the first game of *last* season.

The test results were not even announced until December 2002 and, two months later, with Athletic alleging the samples had been held, frozen, for too long in the laboratories, a decision on what to do about the situation still had not been reached. Progress was further hampered when the federation's Competition Committee, which was examining the case, fell out with the governing body's president, Angel Villar, over his perceived interference in their work.

Meanwhile, Gurpegi protested his innocence, arguing that his body naturally generates 19-Nandrosterona on physical exertion. His explanation was backed by a study from the University of Extremadura which showed that his pre-match 19-Nandrosterona level was 0 nanograms per millilitre, and his post-match level 7.15 (the 'normal' level is 2n/ml). But the federation rejected the findings because they had not been carried out by an International Olympic Committee testing centre.

Eventually, the Spanish Sports Council intervened, forcing a "cautionary" suspension on Gurpegi until a final judgment was made. On April 1, the Competition Committee requested a two-year ban for Gurpegi, which the Sports Council ratified, but three days later the higher-ranking CEDD intervened, and the midfielder had his suspension lifted, enabling him to complete last season.

In the summer, he was supposed to carry out a series of tests designed to prove or disprove the natural-production theory, but arguments between Athletic and the authorities over the nature of the testing meant nothing was done. Now, the CEDD has confirmed the two-year ban, but Athletic have alleged that Gurpegi's legal rights – the assumption of innocence and the right to a defence – have been infringed and say they will take his case to non-sporting courts.

'Atletico's patience is paying off – maybe their axe-wielding maniac owner has mellowed'

The long goodbye

After months of speculation, Hector Cuper was finally sacked as Inter coach

PADDY AGNEW in Rome

OCTOBER WAS A month marked by yet another, not totally unexpected upheaval at Internazionale. On the morning of Sunday the 19th, club owner Massimo Moratti sacked his Argentinian coach Hector Cuper, replacing him with Alberto Zaccheroni, who thus became the 10th coach to sit on the red-hot Inter bench since Moratti took over the club back in February 1995.

If there was any element of surprise about Cuper's sacking it was that it had taken so long to come – the likeable coach had been on the Inter bench for two seasons and two months. But the writing was on the wall following the dismal 3-1 trouncing by city rivals Milan in early October. When Inter manifestly under-performed in their next outing, a 2-2 draw at Brescia, Moratti's patience finally snapped.

It might be argued that Cuper's sacking after only six rounds of the Serie A season and with two wins out of two in the Champions League was a premature, panicky decision. The reality is, however, that Inter's good start in Europe – victories over Arsenal (3-0) and Kyiv Dynamo (2-1) – had been illusory. After those good results, Inter had reverted to their frustrating 'type' of the past two seasons – playing disjointed, unconvincing football constructed around Cuper's all-too-cautious approach.

For Cuper, the most damaging moment probably came on May 5, 2002, the last day of the Serie A season, when a win away at Lazio would have brought Inter the title. But they froze, losing 4-2 to a Lazio side coached, ironically, by Zaccheroni.

Subsequent reports suggested that Inter's preparations for that game had not been totally professional, with players said to have been out partying during the nights leading up to it. True or not, that Lazio defeat confirmed a constant negative of the Cuper period at Inter – his inability to do well against direct title rivals Juventus, Lazio, Milan and Roma. In his two and a bit seasons, Cuper managed to win only two out of 17 games against championship rivals.

Time to go...the end was nigh for Cuper after Inter's 3-1 defeat by Milan in October

The Lazio game also highlighted Cuper's chronic caution under pressure. Remarkably, he has managed to be even more defensive than the Italians themselves, but his 4-4-2 Inter side has rarely shown either the bite or solidity of the Valencia team he led to successive losses in the Champions League Final.

Worse still was his failure to give any form of collective identity to a squad including such talents as strikers Christian Vieri, Obafemi Martins, Mohamed Kallon and Hernan Crespo, midfielders Javier Zanetti and Matias Almeyda, and defenders Ivan Cordoba and Fabio Cannavaro.

In another country, perhaps, Cuper might have been given another chance. After all, he had come within one game of winning Serie A in his first season, and led them to the runners-up spot last term as well as the Champions League semi-finals. But in the end, the coach paid the price not just for the frustrations of those near misses but also for the less-than-sparkling football played by his team. The team's attitude against Brescia, and in other games over the past year, was such that Moratti clearly felt his players had lost faith in Cuper.

Moratti's frustration

The Inter president's frustration is understandable. In his eight-year reign he has poured some £350million into the club, buying players such as Ronaldo, Roberto Carlos, Crespo, Diego Simeone, Clarence Seedorf, Adrian Mutu and Andrea Pirlo. Yet for all that outlay, he has only the 1998 UEFA Cup sitting on the sideboard.

Not too many tears should be shed for Cuper since he will earn £5.7m from Inter over the next two years if he remains unemployed (his contract expires in June 2005). The Argentinian's sacking, incidentally, means that there is not a single foreign coach working at a Serie A club.

By all accounts, Zaccheroni had no hesitation in accepting Moratti's offer. The president had tried to lure Roberto Mancini away from Lazio last spring, but, given the latter's determination to stay on in Rome, Moratti went for the next best available candidate.

Zaccheroni, successful with Udinese in the 1990s prior to winning Serie A with Milan in 1999, will hope to leave far behind him his dismal failure in his last job, as coach of Lazio during 2001-02.

He certainly made an instant impact at Inter. In his first two games in charge – a 0-0 home draw with Roma and a 2-0 win at Chievo – the new look 3-4-3 Inter showed an attacking determination and overall commitment that had been lacking for much of the past year.

● Controversial Perugia boss Luciano Gaucci – the hirer of Japanese star Hidetoshi Nakata in 1998 and Al-Saadi Ghaddafi, the son of Libyan leader Muammar, this summer – has his eyes on two even more novel acquisitions. His latest proposal is to sign two members of Sweden's women's World Cup squad, Hanna Ljungberg and Victoria Svensson. Ironically, Perugia confirmed their "interest" in the week that one Nicoletta Carlitti had her amateur membership status withdrawn by the Italian federation because she "dared" to line out for a men's amateur side.

Lined up...Svensson and Ljungberg

Zaccheroni would also appear to have decided for a settled line-up, rather than tinkering from game to game *a la* Cuper. Among those recalled by the new man are Francesco Coco and Almeyda in midfield, and Alvaro Recoba in attack.

Encouraging signs

The jury is clearly still out on the new-look Inter but the first signs are encouraging – as they are for the Serie A contest in general. After eight rounds, Milan and Juventus were joint top, with Roma two points behind in third. Even at this early stage, it would seem these three will be fighting it out for the title in a contest in which Roma's less onerous European campaign (UEFA Cup instead of Champions League) could yet have a significant impact.

When Juventus were held to a 2-2 draw at home by Roma on the third day of the season, it was a clear indicator that Fabio Capello's reshaped Roma had refound a title-winning appetite and that there was not much to choose between the best teams in the land. Milan's 1-1 draw at home to Juventus in early November further underlined the point.

Juve probably played the better football at San Siro (where, incidentally, the pitch has been relaid for the 32nd time in 14 seasons) but they went behind to a Jon Dahl Tomasson goal in the 65th minute and did not equalise until five minutes from time, through Marco Di Vaio.

Spurred by the draw between the two leaders, Roma, Lazio and Parma all responded immediately with wins to leave the top five teams covered by just four points.

The pattern for the rest of the season is there for all to see. Lazio and Parma will not win the title but they may well decide who does by the points they take from the big three. Between now and Christmas, the first Rome derby in early November, Juve's home clash with Inter on November 30 and Lazio v Juventus on December 7 should shed further light on title expectations.

'Cuper suffered chronic caution under pressure'

Mais non, Fabien

ERIK BIELDERMAN in Marseille

FIFA's block on a loan move to Marseille leaves Barthez in limbo

Now what?...Barthez and Marseille will have to wait until the January transfer window before any deal goes through

FIFA'S DECISION NOT to allow national team goalkeeper Fabien Barthez to join Marseille on loan from Manchester United has left his future at club and international level even more uncertain. Marseille's appeal to FIFA to let the deal go through was turned down because the world body's rules allow such a move only during the summer and winter transfer windows.

There is a rule in France that allows clubs to bring in a new player outside the windows if an existing squad member has been badly injured. Until now, this has applied only to players moving between French clubs. But Marseille president Christophe Bouchet was quick to suggest extending it to include Barthez, out of favour at United, after the French side's reserve keeper, Cedric Carasso, damaged knee ligaments. Ironically, the injury occurred when Carasso was playing for Marseille in an October friendly against France's 1998 World Cup-winning side – for whom Barthez was in goal.

Marseille had already contacted United during the summer, with a view to signing him or taking him on loan, but his wages were considered too high.

Barthez, though, remains first choice for France and is likely to be in goal at Euro 2004. Other contenders such as Gregory Coupet (Lyon) and Mickael Landreau (Nantes) have never convinced coach Jacques Santini they are better alternatives.

He says: "My rule is that a player must be playing regularly for his club to be included in the national squad. But the case of a goalkeeper can be slightly different. Nevertheless, I expect the situation to be clarified. I hope Fabien will play first-team football soon."

Bouchet sought the help of the French federation as Marseille pursued the Barthez case, arguing: "It is in the interest of the France team to see Barthez playing. It is a national cause. We should also not forget that our reserve keeper was injured playing against the France 98 side. So the FA should give us its best support."

However, even Richard Porret, the club official responsible for contact with FIFA, conceded it was unlikely the world body would allow the move "because it could open the gates to new international transfers outside the official windows".

Sure enough, FIFA said no. Nevertheless, Marseille still appear set on Barthez and now seem willing to wait until the January transfer window to get him.

All this leaves Marseille's No 1 keeper, Vedran Runje, in a difficult position. Despite support from the fans, the Croat is now resigned to a new first choice arriving in January. "They can look for a new keeper if they feel they need it," said Runje. "If another arrives, I will be their No 2. But the players and fans have shown they are happy with me."

The Barthez saga has been front-page news and even the national TV channels have opened their bulletins several times with the story. The French public look at the Barthez situation at United in much the same way the English public failed to understand why Eric Cantona was not called up to play for France. But they won the 1998 World Cup and Euro 2000 without him. And United are doing quite well with Tim Howard, aren't they?

'It's in the interests of the France team to see Barthez playing. It's a national cause'

Marseille president Christophe Bouchet

Return of Toppi

NICK BIDWELL in Dortmund

The ex-Leverkusen coach is back on the Bundesliga front line with Hamburg

WELCOME BACK, TOPPI. After an eight-month sabbatical, the inimitable, chain-smoking figure of ex-Leverkusen coach Klaus Toppmoller is again prowling the sidelines, appointed to succeed Austrian Kurt Jara at struggling Hamburg.

During his time off, hardly a week went by without Toppmoller being linked with a host of Bundesliga clubs and overseas sides such as Fulham, Barcelona and Fenerbahce. But Hamburg president Bernd Hoffmann was convinced he was the man to reverse their early-season slump, and Toppmoller jumped at the chance of breathing some much-needed life into a drifting club whose last League title came two decades ago.

"It wouldn't have been a problem to stay out of football for another six months," said 52-year-old Toppmoller. "I always said I would know when the right offer came along. When I spoke to Hoffmann and [general manager] Dietmar Beiersdorfer, I instinctively felt the Hamburg offer was the one for me. They have a great stadium, great fans and there is much ambition here."

Yet the all-important question is – which Toppi will turn up at Hamburg? Will he prove the inspired coach whose emphasis on free-flowing football underpinned Leverkusen's runners-up spots in the Champions League and Bundesliga in 2001-02? Or the seemingly resigned boss who, try as he might, could not prevent the Rhinelanders going into freefall last season and was sacked last February for his pains?

If Toppmoller does succeed at Hamburg, he will deserve the keys to the city. Confidence has been whittled away by just one win from their opening nine League games and a first-round UEFA Cup loss to Ukrainians Dnipro. Key men such as Czech central defender Tomas Ujfalusi, Iranian winger Mehdi Mahdavikia and Argentinian striker Bernardo Romeo have shown little of the outstanding form that propelled Hamburg to an excellent fourth-place finish last term. A packed treatment room is a further complication.

Nor will Toppi find it easy to impose his authority. Many of the players are said to be in rebellious mood following the board's decision to scrap bonus payments. Former club general manager Holger Hieronymus spoke ominously recently about the presence of "bad apples" in the squad.

More to the point, Toppmoller will not have anything like the financial resources he had at Leverkusen, since Hamburg are £14.5 million in the red.

Hansa Rostock are another Bundesliga club hoping a change of leadership will revive their fortunes. Just one win in their first eight games prompted coach Armin Veh to resign, with assistant Juri Schlunz promoted to take the reins. Schlunz promises to be a much more conservative operator than his adventurous predecessor. "We need absolute togetherness and determination to stay in the Bundesliga," he warned. "You don't win points by good football alone."

The lower reaches of the Bundesliga are not the only place to find frustration and discontent, however. Ask high-flying Werder Bremen, who were rocked by the bombshell that two of their best players, Serb central defender Mladen Krstajic and Brazilian striker Ailton, would be leaving for Schalke on a Bosman at the end of the season.

The duo could not be blamed for sending Werder their 'Dear John' missives. Talks with general manager Klaus Allofs over contract extensions had dragged on for quite some time without real progress, and Schalke offered them vastly superior terms. Reports suggest Krstajic will net £750,000 a year more, while Ailton will double his annual salary to £3m. Not that Werder were prepared to be philosophical about the snatch of the day, complaining long and loud about the alleged underhand tactics of Schalke managing director Rudi Assauer.

An inquiry has been launched by the League, and FIFA may take action too. Its rules state players are not allowed to sign for another club on a free transfer more than six months from the end of their current contract.

Predictably, Assauer, who ironically used to be part of the management team at Werder, could not see what all the fuss was about. "Allofs had a long time to persuade Ailton and Krstajic to sign new contracts and couldn't manage it," he said. "I acted in a clean and fair manner. We lost out in a similar way a few years ago when Thomas Linke left us on a free for Bayern."

This is one affair that will not go away. Rarely have two Bundesliga clubs fallen out so spectacularly, and sparks are bound to fly in their next League clash in February.

I'm back...but Toppi will lack the resources he enjoyed at Leverkusen

'I felt instinctively Hamburg's offer was the one for me. There is much ambition here'

Klaus Toppmoller

Key figure...midfielder Alex has been inspirational for League leaders Cruzeiro

Cruze control

Vanderlei Luxemburgo's Cruzeiro close in on the national title

BRIAN HOMEWOOD in Rio de Janeiro

FLAMENGO'S supporters just cannot understand why their team is out of the running for the Brazilian championship title. The fact that their side, already on to their third coach of the championship, is 10th in the table and a whopping 24 points behind leaders Cruzeiro has nothing to do with their bewilderment. Because in a 'normal' year, they would still have a chance.

A 'normal' year in the weird and wonderful world of Brazilian football would be one in which the championship uses a format of mind-boggling complexity, invariably ending with a knockout contest after a league-style first stage. That means that a team can sneak into the top eight on the last day of the regular competition and then start the play-offs on equal terms with the side that finished top, 10, 20 or however many points ahead of them.

Santos did exactly that last season, qualifying for the play-offs in eighth place and then ousting Sao Paulo – who had finished 13 points ahead of them in winning the first phase – as they went on to win the title.

Flamengo themselves performed a similar trick in 1992, the last time they won the championship.

This year, however, is different. For the first time since it was started in 1971, the Brazilian championship is being played on a conventional league basis. The 24 teams play each other twice, and the side with the most points at the end wins the title.

In a rare act of courage and common sense, the Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) has already decided to keep the format for next year as well. They have even promised that by 2006 they will have reduced the First Division to just 20 teams.

"We are entering the first world of football in terms of organisation," Brazil coach Carlos Alberto Parreira proudly declared. Parreira was particularly pleased because this year the CBF avoided scheduling club matches on the same day his side were in action in World Cup qualifiers.

"It's good for us and it's good for the clubs as they don't lose their best players at crucial moments in the tournament," he said.

The decision to maintain the league system for 2004 was made just as the 'bring-back-the-play-offs' lobby was gathering a full head of steam – with the unwitting help of Cruzeiro.

Cruzeiro race clear

In building up a 12-point lead at the top, Vanderlei Luxemburgo's outfit had virtually clinched the championship with almost a quarter of the contest to go. This played straight into the hands of the league system's opponents, who include a number of the bigger clubs, Globo television and the more conservative part of the media.

The possibility of a team running away with the title weeks before the end had always been used as the main argument for having play-offs during the previous 22 national championships. Cruzeiro's charge for the title merely provided more ammunition and prompted one Globo bigwig to describe the league system as "weird".

The likes of Flamengo and Corinthians were quite clearly baffled at the idea that, by mid-October, they were already having to look forward to next year.

Cruzeiro, meanwhile, were reaping the rewards for planning ahead and building their team before the competition started, something for which Luxemburgo – love him or loathe him – must take the credit.

A run of seven consecutive wins, with midfielder Alex again the inspiration, put Cruzeiro on the brink of the title, although they then allowed Santos a glimmer of hope by losing to Juventude and Internacional in five days in mid-October. By press time, their lead was down to six points with seven matches left to play.

Santos, who had struggled to equal last year's form when they delighted the country, stormed back into contention with a 7-4 win over Bahia followed by a 4-0 thrashing of Coritiba.

There was plenty going on elsewhere as the recriminations for failure began earlier than usual. Corinthians coach Geninho announced his resignation in the players' tunnel minutes after his side, last year's runners-up, crashed 6-1 at Juventude – their worst defeat in the competition's history.

"I don't think a team like Corinthians can lose by a scoreline like this," he said. "I'm not one to throw in the towel. But there comes a moment when you have to stop. So I'm leaving."

In an apparently bold move, the club replaced him with a big-name double act, bringing in Rivelino, the 1970 World Cup winner famous for his banana kicks, as technical director, and Junior, he of the memorable 1982 Brazil team, as coach.

But the latter, with previous coaching experience limited to two unremarkable stints with his beloved Flamengo, did not like what he saw and resigned after just 10 days.

Take that...Romario lays into the fan

● Fluminense's poor performances prompted one outraged supporter to release live chickens on to the pitch during a practice session, in addition to insulting Romario. The 1994 World Cup hero – all 5ft 4in of him – rushed into the stands and gave the supporter a good punching. The club took no action against the forward.

Flamengo flushed away

Flamengo's chances of making the Libertadores Cup were flushed away as they lost 3-0 to Parana, even though 12 members of their opponents' squad were struck down with a bout of diarrhoea the night before. Carrot cake at the team hotel was blamed.

Two days later, a newspaper produced a damning report on the run-down state of Flamengo, claiming that the changing-rooms at the club's training ground were infested with cockroaches and that one practice session had to be cancelled after cat faeces was found on the pitch. Six days after that, coach Oswaldo de Oliveira resigned, citing "poor infrastructure".

He was replaced by his brother and former assistant, Waldemar. The hapless new incumbent was greeted with chants of "Get out, Waldemar" by a small group of supporters who wanted someone with stronger Flamengo connections.

Despite their misfortunes, Flamengo and Corinthians were at least clear of the relegation zone. Gremio – the club where Luiz Felipe Scolari made his name in the mid-1990s – and Fluminense were favourites for the drop.

Not even the return of Romario after a 90-day injury-enforced absence could inspire Fluminense. The 37-year-old celebrated his comeback with a penalty in a 2-0 win over Atletico Paranaense but, although he converted another four days later, Goias replied with six, despite having a player sent off in the 19th minute.

"If a pregnant woman had put on a Goias shirt, she would have played well against us today," fumed coach Renato, who was sacked in June and reinstated in September after his replacement, Joel Santana, was also fired.

Meanwhile, Renato, who cultivated a playboy image in his playing days, demanded discipline from his team. "I used to go out at night – but I won games on the pitch," he said.

'If a pregnant woman had put on a Goias shirt, she'd have played well against us'

Fluminense coach Renato

Hands-on development...Colombia are turning to youth and a quicker style of play, but has it come too late for the man at the helm?

Maturana feels the heat

TIM VICKERY
in Cali

The national coach is under pressure as the debate over Colombian football's future intensifies

URUGUAY ARE UNLIKELY to add any more World Cup triumphs to South America's total of nine. But there is one country that could help Brazil and Argentina keep the continent ahead of Europe in the all-time tally.

With a football-crazy population approaching 45 million, plenty of urban centres and a capacity for producing talented players, Colombia has the potential to become one of the game's major forces.

But now, after the progress of the 1980s and 1990s, Colombian football finds itself passing through a difficult phase. There is little money in the domestic game, and the style of play is at the centre of an intense debate, most of which swirls around the figure of national team coach Francisco Maturana.

He is the man associated with the triumphs of Colombian football, and also with its distinctive, short-passing style. Now some accuse him of being yesterday's man, unsure of how to lead the team into the next phase of their development.

Certainly, Colombia have made a very poor start to the World Cup qualification campaign. Defeats by Brazil and Bolivia have left them at the bottom of the table and the speculation is that, to keep his job, Maturana needs four points from this month's home games against Venezuela and Argentina.

Players and coaches from Argentina did most to implant football in Colombia. It caught on quickly. The city of Cali, which has supplied eight of the county's last 15 champions, grew from a population of 23,000 in 1910 to 284,000 in 1955, and since to 2.2 million. The growth of football accompanied the urban expansion. Land famous for producing coffee and cocaine was fertile ground for a style of play also capable of giving a buzz – few who saw Carlos Valderrama and Freddy Rincon bamboozle the Germans in the 1990 World Cup will ever forget it. Colombia put their own spin on Argentina's short-passing game, interpreting it in a joyful, less direct form which made it seem that possession of the ball was the ultimate goal.

This is the style from which Colombia is now moving away. "We no longer have to give 10 passes inside one square metre," says Union Magdalena coach and former international Eduardo Retat.

Independiente Santa Fe coach Jorge Comesana carries the debate forward. "We're in transition between what was called 'the Colombian identity' and something that hasn't been defined yet," he says.

"Teams no longer have the ball for 20 or 30 seconds. Now it's more like nine, because we're trying to play faster and be more direct. But the players grew up with the idea that possession was the most important thing. Now, trying to rush, they give it away too quickly."

Colombia's Under-23 coach, Jaime De la Pava, whom many see as a future national team boss, argues: "We haven't lost our style, we're just adding new things and so becoming more dynamic."

For him, the problems of today are rooted in the past. "We had a generation of spontaneous players, like Valderrama, Rincon and Faustino Asprilla, and took it for granted," he says. "We stopped paying attention to the base, to youth development work and preparation in general.

"It means that we're starting from scratch in so many areas; in physical preparation, for example. Also in psychological preparation, which is very important because our players frequently lack self-esteem."

Better times seem to be on the way given that, after a decade's absence, Colombia qualified for both the Under-17 and Under-20 world championships this year. Indeed, the Under-17s reached the semi-finals in Finland, and De la Pava sees them as a generation of huge potential.

'We had a generation of spontaneous players and took it for granted'

Colombia's Under-23 coach Jaime De la Pava

"Before, everything we did was improvised," says Reynaldo Rueda, Colombia's youth development specialist, who takes the Under-20s to the World Youth Cup later this month. "Of the Under-17 squad, maybe three or four would make it through to the Under-20s. Now we have a process in place."

Paradoxically, this process is being helped by Colombian football's economic problems. For years huge sums of drug money were laundered through the game, in the construction of stadiums and the signing of top players from abroad.

Tighter controls

Now controls are much tighter, and so clubs are much poorer. It is impossible for them to hang on to their best players. Deportivo Cali, America and Independiente Medellin all had splendid campaigns in this year's Libertadores Cup, but then had their outstanding players snapped up by clubs in Mexico and Argentina. Obviously, the clubs' performances on the field have suffered as a result.

It makes the current Colombian championship a very even affair – many would term it mediocre across the board. But it does mean clubs are forced to give youngsters a chance. A glance down the team-sheets of the top-flight clubs shows many players born in the 1980s. International experience, however, is another thing.

"For a decade our youth sides would play some pretty football but never qualify," says Rueda. "Now we've learnt international football is different from ours. It's decided in the penalty area, where our weak points are heading and finishing."

Astonishingly few goals are scored in Colombian football. The average in the current tournament is just over 2.2 per game.

De la Pava believes coaches are concentrating on organising the defence and just leaving the attack to inspiration. He says: "Inspiration is clearly an important part of attacking, but we need to organise the attack as well. We have a lot to do in this area. We have talented strikers, but no goalscorers. Juan Pablo Angel, for example, only learnt to finish when he went to River Plate in Argentina. After every training session they made him stay behind to work on his shooting."

The domestic problems clearly find their way through to the senior national team. In Maturana's current spell in charge, Colombia have played 16 games and scored a mere eight goals. Admittedly, experimental sides have sometimes been fielded, and a total of 61 players have been used. But whatever the line-up, Colombia have always lacked penetration.

Perhaps, though, Maturana carries a share of the blame. In moving away from his previous devotion to possession football, the coach has fallen back on an obsession with defensive solidity.

Evidence that he has gone too far comes from his own centre-backs. Normally defenders are quick to complain about a lack of cover, but Colombia's centre-back pairing have very different concerns.

"I'm worried that we're hardly creating any chances," says Mario Yepes. Ivan Cordoba agrees, saying: "Against Brazil, there was a feeling there was no way we could score. We have to improve this weak point."

With the perspective of his Internazionale experience, Cordoba puts his finger on the problem. "We need more movement, more players getting in position to receive the ball to give us more attacking options."

This is the principal problem of Colombia's phase of transition. They are trying to be more direct, but without the running off the ball that this entails.

Lack of movement

Jhon Restrepo was supposed to supply the long passes out of midfield, and Geovanny Hernandez the playmaking – and both are on the end of heavy criticism. But without movement around him, the man in possession dies with the ball at his feet. In the first two World Cup qualifiers Colombia's play was characterised by a lack of speed in the last third of the field, especially down the flanks.

Now it is up to Maturana to conjure an improvement. His critics doubt he can. They see him as an alarmingly passive figure, tired beyond his 54 years. His supporters still feel he can supply the magic touch.

One way or another he will be judged by the results against Venezuela and Argentina. November is indeed an important month for Colombian football and for the career of Francisco Maturana.

The guessing game

As Milan prepare to play Boca Juniors for the title of world club champions, Rivaldo's future remains as uncertain as ever. Keir Radnedge reports

NO ONE DOUBTS the great talent of Vitor Borba Ferreira, otherwise and better known as Rivaldo. But nor is anyone any longer in doubt about the complexities of putting it to practical use – which is precisely why the Brazilian will be the biggest name available in the January transfer window.

His record of achievement makes him one of the most successful footballers in the game's history:

- one World Cup (2002; and once runner-up, 1998)
- one Copa America (1999)
- one Confederations Cup (1997)
- two European Supercups (2003 with Milan, 1997 with Barcelona)
- one UEFA Champions League (2003 with Milan – albeit as an unused reserve on the day of the Final)
- two Spanish League titles (1998 and 1999 with Barcelona)
- one Spanish Cup (1998 with Barcelona)
- one Brazilian championship (1994 with Palmeiras)

Add to that a string of personal awards, headed by the 1999 hat-trick of *World Soccer* Player of the Year, FIFA World Player of the Year and European Footballer of the Year.

But it is as near to a surefire thing that he will not get a chance to add to his list of achievements when Milan play Boca Juniors in the World Club Cup Final in Yokohama on December 14.

For this is the same Rivaldo who has had worldly-wise coaches such as Louis Van Gaal and Carlo Ancelotti virtually tearing their hair out in frustration; the same Rivaldo whom Brazilian fans have despised for being 'too European' and whom European fans have thought to be 'still too Brazilian'.

The delicate touch of his left foot is mixed with a mighty shot; he covers wide acres of the pitch yet still manages to look coltish and awkward. His achievements and talent demand a place as of right in any pantheon of the game. But he remains a footballing enigma, and the past 18 months at Milan have only added to the confusion. So far this season Rivaldo has played more times for his country than he has in League competition for his club. Last season Milan used him in only a handful of matches in Serie A. So why did they sign him? And why do they remain as reluctant as they are to let him go?

For the answer, one has to go right to the top, not merely of Milan but of Italian politics – the Prime Minister, media magnate and club owner Silvio Berlusconi.

Ever since he rescued the *rossoneri* from the brink of bankruptcy in the mid-1980s he has run the club for effect but also as a toy. Like any successful captain of industry he handpicked and appointed the right men for their sectors of responsibility: coaches such as Arrigo Sacchi, Fabio Capello and now (after a few inevitable mis-castings) Ancelotti; administrators such as Adriano Galliani, who has managed remarkably to run both the club while simultaneously, as president of the League, controlling the squabbling rabble comprising the majority of the presidents of Serie A and B.

Berlusconi's orders

But then Berlusconi also likes to play with his toy. When his favourite players were the likes of Ruud Gullit and Marco Van Basten that was no problem – they were a coach's dream and guaranteed a starting place. But when his favourite players were acquired more for whim than wear it was a different matter.

It was easy to imagine the groan of frustration when the order came down that Berlusconi liked a particular player. Rivaldo was a case in point.

In the summer of 2002 the then Barcelona president Joan Gaspart decided the answer to the club's latest crisis was to recall Van Gaal. Given that the footballing ideologies of the Dutchman and Rivaldo were poles apart and had already prompted one damaging rift, it was clear the door was being opened for Rivaldo – even though his contract was still running.

The Brazilian thus had the peculiar experience of celebrating World Cup triumph while being effectively kicked out by his club. Barcelona wanted him out of Van Gaal's hair and also off an over-inflated payroll so fast they gave him a free transfer. This was where Berlusconi vanity stepped in. Neighbours Internazionale were on the brink of losing their World Cup hero Ronaldo – how wonderful to sign his attacking partner and all for free!

So that's what Milan did.

Never mind that Rivaldo was about as far from Ancelotti's model of a Serie A footballer as could be; never mind that he was too old and too successful a dog to be taught new tricks; never mind that he had never known any of the sort of tactical disciplines imposed by an Italian coach.

In Serie A and Champions League he scored seven goals in 18 starts but ended the season dissatisfied at not being first-choice as he had always been over the previous decade of his career. Rivaldo underwent extensive dental treatment during the summer to sort out a long-standing jaw problem, then returned during pre-season wanting to be told he had done his apprenticeship and now would be a first-team fixture.

Ancelotti had other ideas. At the end of August Milan beat FC Porto 1-0 in Monaco to win the European Supercup. Rivaldo was the substitute for Andrii Shevchenko, who had scored what proved the decisive goal, 15 minutes from time. The following Monday Milan opened their Serie A campaign with a 2-0 win over Ancona. Shevchenko scored both the goals, Kaka – the new Brazilian on the block – made a spectacular debut, and Rivaldo watched all 90 minutes from the bench. The writing was on the pitch.

Rivaldo flew home, furious, to join up with Brazil. He said: "I recommended Kaka and I'm glad he started well. I don't want any trouble with the club. But what matters, wherever you play, is that the coach believes in his players, especially his best players. At Milan, that's not happening."

Later Rivaldo embellished his theme, saying: "If I am going to be kept on the bench then I would prefer to join another club. It's true I wasn't physically on top of my game last season but that's all sorted now. I was patient last season because I was at a new club in a new country. But now I need to play regularly to maintain my place with Brazil."

Ancelotti tried to play down the tension down, saying: "I've been told Rivaldo has played twice for Brazil and played well enough, and it's true he's certainly up to the mark now in fitness terms. But no one is guaranteed a place in the starting line-up. It's the same at other clubs when you have so many outstanding players. I've got more than 11 superstars here, so they all have to take their turn. I told Rivaldo all this. He has to do his best to impress me in training – but it's up to me to make the decisions that I think are best for the club."

Clearing the air

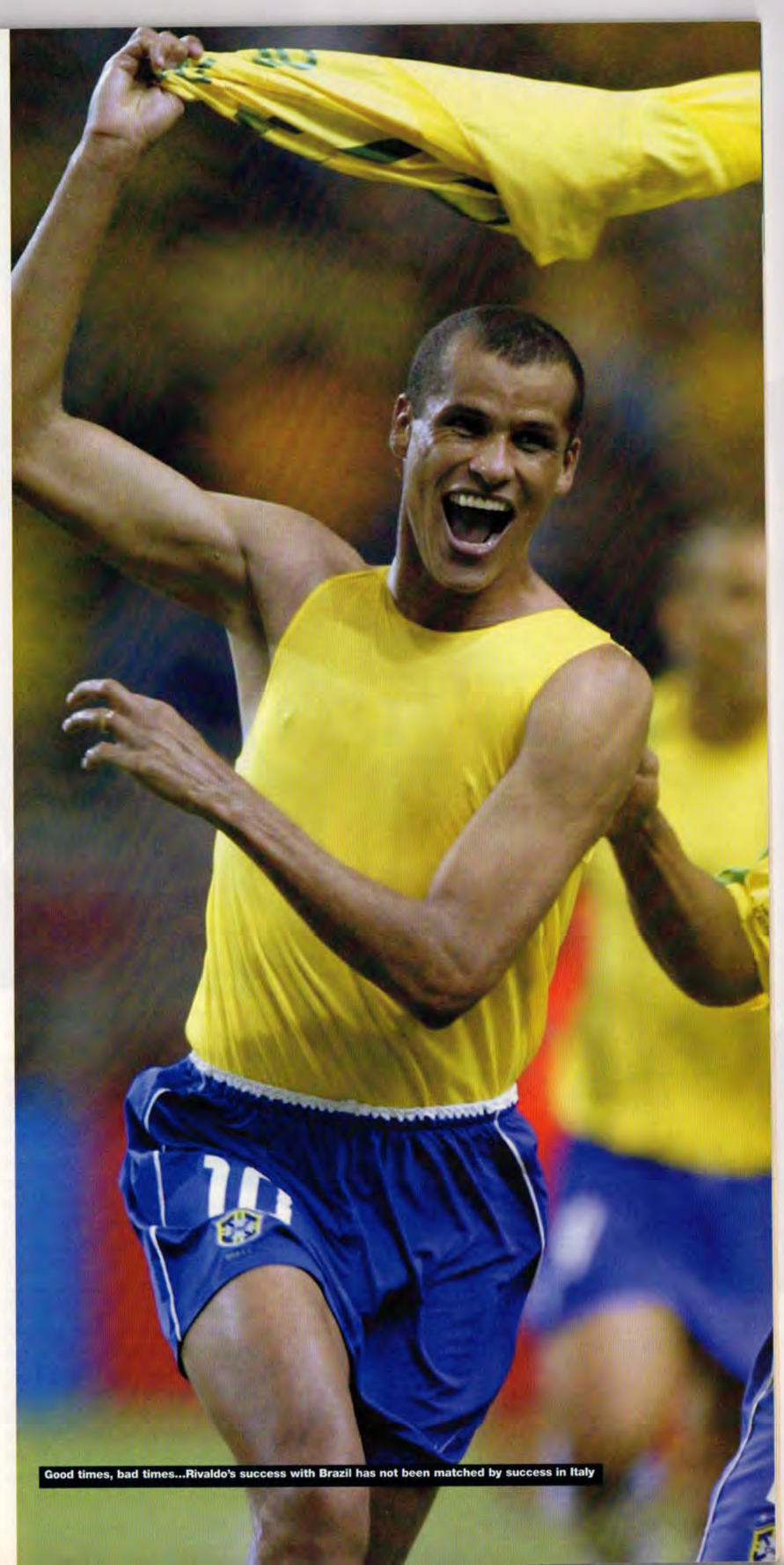
Just when the whispers started of possible interest from an English Premiership club – with Tottenham and Middlesbrough the most likely suitors – and from the 'veterans league' in Qatar, so Berlusconi stepped in. He visits Milan in training every now and again. This particular call coincided with an injury to Pippo Inzaghi and raised the possibility of a League recall for Rivaldo against Lecce that weekend.

In fact, with Berlusconi's back turned, Rivaldo was not even on the bench. But the Prime Minister's diplomatic effort had not been in vain. Two further days of talks with Galliani duly cleared the air. Rivaldo let it be known he was happy to stay until the year's end, while Milan agreed to release him fee-free, even though his contract does not expire until 2005.

Galliani said: "When you are 31 then three months is a long time out of a career. Rivaldo can stay here, stay fit with us and then, on January 2, he can transfer somewhere else. He understands there would be no point walking out now. Where would he train? At least if he stays here then he will still be in the game and he can keep his place with Brazil.

"I think we understand each other."

And not many in European football have been able to say that about one of the most successful Brazilian players of all time.



Good times, bad times...Rivaldo's success with Brazil has not been matched by success in Italy

Move over, Rivaldo

No fear...Kaka has settled in Milan in double-quick time

Paddy Agnew on the new Brazilian kid in town

"THE GUY IS a phenomenon. How could I be jealous of him? I advised Milan to buy him."

The speaker is Rivaldo and the "phenomenon" in question is 21-year-old Ricardo Izeczon Santos Leite, otherwise known as Kaka. Rivaldo's complimentary remarks are hardly idle chatter. After all, if and when Rivaldo moves on from European champions Milan (probably in January) then he will have his natural heir, Kaka, to thank for his premature exit.

These days, a lot of compliments are flowing Kaka's way. After watching him score in Milan's 3-1 derby win over Inter in early October, the peerless Pele delivered a vote of confidence, saying: "He played very, very well. I'm not surprised that he has already made it big in Italian football."

And there's the rub about Kaka. Traditional wisdom would argue that it takes time to settle down and acclimatise to Serie A. In the past, even such matchless talents as Frenchmen Michel Platini and Zinedine Zidane took six months to find their feet and play their best football.

So, how come a 21-year-old Brazilian has pulled it off, seemingly without fuss or hassle? How come a player with whom Milan had intended to wait until the 2004-05 season before introducing him to Serie A has managed to play his way straight into the first team?

For, make no mistake, such is Kaka's all-too-obvious talent that two months into the new season he has already found space at the expense of two much more experienced team-mates – Rivaldo and Portugal's Rui Costa. From here to the end of the season, he is likely to share the midfield playmaking role with Rui Costa in an ongoing rotation that will mean the two rarely line up together. In the meantime, Rivaldo, Kaka's friend, advisor and sponsor, sits in the stand, shut out of the side and probably on his way out of Italian football.

The sheer class of the youngster, the overall strength of the Milan squad and the advantage of finding himself immediately part of a 'Brazilian gang' (Cafu, Dida, Serginho and Rivaldo) have all undoubtedly eased Kaka's start at the club.

The finished article

Blessed with pace, perfect balance, an ability to play off either foot, good positional sense and spectacular passing ability, he quite simply looks like the finished article, even at such a young age. So much so that rather than being intimidated by lining up alongside such as Shevchenko, Inzaghi, Pirlo, Seedorf, Nesta and Maldini, he immediately gives the impression of having played half his lifetime with them.

Not surprisingly, Milan are positively chortling with delight at the quality of their latest big signing (£6 million from Sao Paulo). Acting president Adriano Galliani said: "We were tipped off about Kaka three years ago by our man in Brazil. We took a look at a video of him and immediately decided to keep a close eye on him. At the time, he was only 18, but class like that is special, very few players have it."

Instrumental in persuading Kaka to accept Milan's offer was Leonardo, his compatriot and a former Milan player. When Leonardo returned to Sao Paulo in the summer of 2001, he took the youngster aside and explained that Milan were serious about him.

From that moment on, says Galliani, Milan had their man. Even when Chelsea's Russian magnate Roman Abramovich came knocking this summer, Kaka refused to change his mind, declining higher wages in order to stick with Milan. This gesture, says Galliani, is not one that the club will lightly forget.

The interest shown by Chelsea, allied to the consequent speculation on the part of the Brazilian media, did have one important knock-on effect. Given the circumstances, Milan and Galliani decided to bring forward Kaka's move to Italy by a year to prevent any more of Europe's biggest and best from suffering temptation. That move now looks more inspired than premature.

It would be wrong to underestimate the help Kaka has received from his Brazilian team-mates. On the day after his brilliant performance in the derby had made him a new hero for the Milan fans, he was seen in the city on a shopping expedition, accompanied by Rivaldo.

Rather than resenting the newest kid on the block, Rivaldo was at his side helping him. The Brazilian clan of elder brothers has also been seen escorting Kaka on educational outings to Verona and Venice. It says something, too, about the youngster that he wanted to do a bit of sightseeing.

Middle-class background

The son of an engineer father and a maths teacher mother, Kaka does not fit into the Latin American cliche role of "poor boy from the *favelas*". Rather, he comes from a middle-class background – had he failed as a footballer, he would have had little difficulty finding an alternative career. He is, suggests Galliani, mature beyond his years, and his background has also helped him settle in quickly.

For the time being, Milan see only one cloud on the Kaka horizon. That concerns his involvement with Brazil's Under-23 team, due to play in a qualifying tournament for next year's Olympic Games throughout almost all of January. Milan are reluctant to lose him for so long, while they are also concerned about the physical demands the tournament will make on his young physique. At press time, behind-the-scenes negotiations were ongoing, but this one is sure to run and run right down to the wire.

One final thought concerns his name. Where on earth did "Kaka" come from? It is apparently derived from younger brother Rodrigo's inability to properly pronounce his elder sibling's real name, Ricardo. It was a bit unfortunate, now he is in Italy, that the nickname is dangerously close to the Italian *cacca*, a generic word often used by children by way of indicating a reason for going to the toilet. Two months into the season, though, the new boy's name no longer causes embarrassment.

South America 21 Europe 20

SOUTH AMERICA still has the edge over Europe in the World Club Cup, the annual contest between the champions of the two continents. The fixture, also known as the Intercontinental Cup and the Toyota Cup (after the Japanese sponsor), has been won by South American sides 21 times to Europe's 20. However, European sides have won seven of the last eight contests. Boca Juniors were the last South American victors in 2000.

The encounter was played over two legs until 1979. It experienced difficulties in the 1970s when European champions Ajax (1971, 1973), Bayern Munich (1974) and Liverpool (1977) withdrew. In 1980 it became a one-off match when it moved to Tokyo under the auspices of Toyota. Last year, the match switched to Yokohama International stadium, venue for the 2002 World Cup Final.

1960 Penarol 0 Real Madrid 0; **Real Madrid** 5 Penarol 1
1961 Benfica 1 Penarol 0; Penarol 5 Benfica 0; play-off – **Penarol** 2 Benfica 1
1962 Santos 3 Benfica 2; Benfica 2 **Santos** 5
1963 Milan 4 Santos 2; Santos 4 Milan 2; play-off – **Santos** 1 Milan 0
1964 Independiente 1 Internazionale 0; Internazionale 2 Independiente 0; play-off – **Internazionale** 1 Independiente 0
1965 Internazionale 3 Independiente 0; Independiente 0 **Internazionale** 0
1966 Penarol 2 Real Madrid 0; Real Madrid 0 **Penarol** 2
1967 Celtic 1 Racing Club 0; Racing Club 2 Celtic 1; play-off – **Racing Club** 1 Celtic 0
1968 Estudiantes 1 Manchester United 0; Manchester United 1 **Estudiantes** 1
1969 Milan 3 Estudiantes 0; Estudiantes 2 Milan 1 (**Milan** 4-2 on agg)
1970 Estudiantes 2 Feyenoord 2; **Feyenoord** 1 Estudiantes 0
1971 Panathinaikos 1 Nacional 1; **Nacional** 2 Panathinaikos 1
1972 Independiente 1 Ajax 1; **Ajax** 3 Independiente 0
1973 **Independiente** 1 Juventus 0 (one leg only)
1974 Independiente 1 Atletico Madrid 0; Atletico Madrid 2 Independiente 0 (**Atletico Madrid** 2-1 on agg)
1975 not held
1976 Bayern Munich 2 Cruzeiro 0; Cruzeiro 0 **Bayern Munich** 0
1977 Boca Juniors 2 Borussia Monchengladbach 2; Borussia Monchengladbach 0 **Boca Juniors** 3
1978 not held
1979 Malmo 0 Olimpia 1; **Olimpia** 2 Malmo 1
1980 **Nacional** 1 Nottingham Forest 0
1981 **Flamengo** 3 Liverpool 0
1982 **Penarol** 2 Aston Villa 0
1983 **Gremio** 2 Hamburg 1
1984 **Independiente** 1 Liverpool 0
1985 Juventus 2 Argentinos Juniors 2 (**Juventus** 4-2 on pens)
1986 **River Plate** 1 Steaua Bucharest 0
1987 **Porto** 2 Penarol 1
1988 Nacional 2 PSV Eindhoven 2 (**Nacional** 7-6 on pens)
1989 **Milan** 1 Atletico National 0
1990 **Milan** 3 Olimpia 0
1991 **Red Star Belgrade** 3 Colo Colo 0
1992 **Sao Paulo** 2 Barcelona 1
1993 **Sao Paulo** 3 Milan 2
1994 **Velez Sarsfield** 2 Milan 0
1995 Ajax 0 Gremio 0 (**Ajax** 4-3 on pens)
1996 **Juventus** 1 River Plate 0
1997 **Borussia Dortmund** 2 Cruzeiro 0
1998 **Real Madrid** 1 Vasco da Gama 0
1999 **Manchester United** 1 Palmeiras 0
2000 **Boca Juniors** 2 Real Madrid 1
2001 **Bayern Munich** 1 Boca Juniors 0
2002 **Real Madrid** 2 Olimpia 0

Golden boy...Carlos Tevez is Boca's main source of goals

Congestion charge

Boca may well have a price to pay for playing so many games in the run-up to the Yokohama tie. Eric Weil reports

BOCA JUNIORS WILL be making their third visit to Japan in four years when they play Milan in Yokohama in next month's World Club Cup Final, the annual contest between the champions of Europe and South America.

Boca, holders of the Libertadores Cup, will be competing in a fourth World Club Cup Final, having been winners in 1978 and 2000 and losing finalists in 2001. For coach Carlos Bianchi, it will be his fourth Final, having previously won the trophy with Velez Sarsfield in 1994.

"I never thought I would win more honours as a coach than as a player," says Bianchi, who scored 369 League goals as a centre-forward – 206 for Velez and 156 in the French League – and also played for Argentina.

Remarkably, only two Boca players are left from previous World Club Cup Finals – midfielder Sebastian Battaglia and striker Guillermo Barros Schelotto. The latter has been out injured for some time, but should be ready for Yokohama.

The World Club Cup is Boca's top priority, but as they went into November they were still in the running to win two other trophies – the Argentinian opening championship and the Copa Sudamericana. To be able to achieve this, Boca were facing the prospect of playing 22 matches in 78 days (starting from October 1), with their domestic League programme ending on the weekend of December 6/7, the World Club Cup the following Sunday and the second leg of the Sudamericana on December 17. To complete such a heavy programme, they will have to dig deep in their squad of over 40 players, the majority products of arguably the ▶

'I never thought I would win more honours as a coach than as a player'

Carlos Bianchi

BOCA JUNIORS – THE SQUAD

GOALKEEPERS

Roberto ABBONDANZIERI
19.08.72. At the club six years, but a reserve until Oscar Cordoba left last year. Reliable and with excellent reflexes, he has become an outstanding keeper.

Wilfredo CABALLERO
28.09.81. Agile regular reserve drawn from the youth teams.

DEFENDERS

Nicolas BURDISSO
12.04.81. A central defender who can also play wide, he is strong, fast and good in the air. A youth team product and member of the Argentina Under-20 side that won the 2001 World Youth Cup. Has a good understanding with Schiavi.

Jose Maria CALVO
15.07.81. Good-quality reserve full-back with some 40 first-team appearances to his name, but an injury could keep him out of the World Club Cup squad.

Diego CROSA
18.04.76. Experienced former first-teamer who lost his place in the side to up-and-coming youngsters.

Injury doubt...Jose Maria Calvo could miss the Yokohama trip

Promising talent...Pablo Jerez

Pablo JEREZ
26.07.83. Promising newcomer and a recent first-team regular. His outstanding performances have earned him a call-up for the national Under-20 team, though he is unlikely to be released for the World Youth Cup later this month in the United Arab Emirates.

Luis PEREA (Col)
30.01.79. Colombian international signed this season as an experienced reserve.

Clemente RODRIGUEZ
31.07.81. Fast, athletic full-back who can be dangerous on attacking forays. Has already played three times for the national (so-called B) team of home-based players. Was actually given a free transfer by a Second Division club, but coach Bianchi tried him out and soon promoted him to the first team.

Rolando SCHIAVI
18.01.73. Towering central defender, intelligent, hard-working and good in the air. Also takes penalties. Several European clubs have shown interest in him.

MIDFIELDERS

Sebastian BATTAGLIA
08.11.80. The main midfield organiser. Another product of the club's youth ranks, he was a member of the Boca squad that played in Tokyo in 2000 and 2001, and has played twice in the national (B) team of home-based players.

Diego CAGNA
19.04.70. Veteran and respected captain of the side who returned to Boca from Mexico after playing under Bianchi in his first stint in charge (1998-2001). Shows excellent fitness despite his age, and has made more than 350 first-team appearances.

Alfredo CASCINI
07.04.71. Joined the club last year with the job of replacing the popular Mauricio Serna. Hard-tackling and hard-working, he connects defence and attack.

Matias DONNET
18.04.80. Creative midfielder or deep-lying forward. Has good ball control and a powerful shot.

Fabian VARGAS (Col)
17.04.80. Signed this season. Shows good technique but has mostly been a reserve.

Javier VILLARREAL
01.03.79. Strong reserve player with good tactical discipline. Played in Spain for Cordoba.

FORWARDS

Guillermo BARROS SCHELOTTO
04.05.73. One of the best strikers in Argentina, a goal maker and scorer with close to 350 first-team appearances. Formed a lethal attacking duo with Martin Palermo, now in Spain, in 2000 and with Marcelo Delgado in 2001 but out injured in recent weeks. Has played 10 times for Argentina – more than any current Boca player – but lately out of favour.

Franco CANGELE
16.07.84. Newcomer drawn from the youth section who has proved an excellent substitute for Tevez. Has played for the national Under-20s.

Raul ESTEVEZ
21.01.78. Reserve striker with some 150 first-team games.

Pedro 'IARLEY' Lima Dantas (Bra)
29.03.74. Signed this season after spells with Spanish Second Division clubs. Had a lot to live up to wearing the number 10 shirt, but he has become the first Brazilian in a long time to be a success at a club whose style does not usually suit Brazilians. Fast, with good technique and ball control, he has scored some beautiful goals and is not afraid to take his share of knocks.

Old hand...Diego Cagna

Carlos TEVEZ
05.02.84. Enough praise has been heaped upon the team's young star, who, in spite of always being heavily marked and suffering frequent fouls, manages to set up and score many goals. Started as an attacking midfielder to replace Juan Roman Riquelme, but was found to be more useful as a striker. Tevez is an Under-20 international and many feel he should be called up for the senior team.

Tokyo triumph...Boca celebrate beating Real Madrid in the 2000 World Club Cup Final

best youth policy in Argentina, under Bernardo Griffa.

Boca won the Libertadores Cup for the fifth time last June and created a record aggregate score in the Final when they beat Brazil's Santos (previously unbeaten) 5-1 over the two legs. But from that team defender Hugo Ibarra has gone to Monaco and joint top scorer Marcelo Delgado (nine goals in the Libertadores) has left for Mexico's Cruz Azul. The squad has not been severely weakened by the departures, but the dependence on 19-year-old forward Carlos Tevez is a concern.

Boca led Argentina's opening championship by three points after 12 of the 19 rounds. They won their first five games – their best start since the championship was divided into opening and closing tournaments in 1991 – but then Tevez was injured and was sorely missed as they drew three of their next four games.

Tevez – fans compare him to a young Maradona – was originally drafted into the first team as a replacement for Barcelona-bound Juan Roman Riquelme, who played as a creative midfielder or deep-lying forward. But the teenager has proved himself more effective as a striker and is among the domestic League's top scorers.

The teenager was not involved in the Libertadores Cup group stage last spring as he was training with the national Under-20 team for the World Youth Cup in the United Arab Emirates. That tournament was then postponed because of security concerns in the run-up to the Iraq war, and Tevez returned to Boca to score five valuable goals in his side's march to win the Libertadores. Now, though, he is needed once again by the Under-20s with the World Youth Cup finally set to kick off at the end of this month. Boca have refused to release him; Under-20 coach Hugo Tocalli has rejected the idea of Tevez travelling back and forth to the UAE tournament from Japan. At press time the impasse was unresolved.

The forward, one of the most closely-marked players in the Argentinian League, has tolerated the punishment he receives well. But Bianchi has warned: "He always finishes matches with a lot of bruises. If at 19 they kick him such a lot, he will not be able to play much longer. Referees do nothing to protect the good players."

Boca distinguish themselves from other Argentinian clubs – even perpetual title rivals River Plate – by selling relatively few players abroad. Of course, Boca have sold players – in some cases when they insisted on a move (Riquelme) or when a player is past his best. But they also loan out many reserve players to give them first-team experience.

'Boca rely more on teamwork than individual brilliance – hence a skilful player like Tevez stands out from the rest'

The club rely more on keeping team changes to a minimum – in contrast to most other clubs, who ship players abroad, take them back when they are veterans and get others on one-season loans.

Boca run two virtual 'first teams'. This is thanks largely to the work of club president Mauricio Macri and Bianchi – who are both a cut above their local contemporaries. Bianchi manages to get the best out of his squad, while Macri's astute management has resulted in the virtual avoidance of the financial disagreements with players that are so common at other clubs.

Many wonder why so few Boca players have been called up by national coach Marcelo Bielsa. However, the club rely more on teamwork than individual brilliance – hence a skilful player like Tevez stands out from the rest.

In front of goalkeeper Roberto Abbondanzieri, Boca have fast, tall defenders in the shape of Pablo Jerez, Rolando Schiavi, Nicolas Burdisso and Clemente Rodriguez. The quartet have been virtual ever-presents in recent months, meaning they have built up a good understanding. Rodriguez and Jerez, the full-backs, are quick on the counter-attack, and have worthy reserves in Jose Calvo, Diego Crosa and Colombian international Luis Perea.

Midfield creativity is not the team's strongest point – which is why Bianchi wanted to bring back Riquelme at the start of the season. However, he did not want to return to "unsafe" Argentina, where his younger brother was kidnapped before he left for Barcelona. So Battaglia has taken over the playmaking role, backed by experienced team captain Diego Cagna – the veteran at 33 – and Alfredo Cascini, who plays in the holding role.

The 'second team' midfield is Javier Villarreal, Matias Donnet and Colombian Fabian Vargas.

Boca generally play 4-3-1-2 or 4-3-3. The usual Libertadores Cup attack was Delgado and Barros Schelotto (who scored six goals), but with the former gone and the latter injured, a number of variations have been tried. The most successful combination has been Tevez and the Brazilian Iarley.

Franco Cangele, a 19-year-old youth international, and Raul Estevez have enjoyed some success as replacements for Tevez. But Boca's greatest weakness is their lack of a big target man.

Overall, the club have a squad capable of giving Milan a run for their money in Yokohama. The biggest challenge will be coping with such a demanding fixture list.

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Going cheap

Sid Lowe on the striker who is set to leave Barcelona for a fraction of his true value

HOW MUCH WOULD you pay for a striker who had grabbed the winning goal in a European Cup Final? A footballer who had scored over 100 times for one of Europe's biggest clubs? A 27-year-old who was his country's all-time leading marksman with 40 goals in 73 games? A man described by one manager as the greatest No 9 in the world?

Ten million? Fifteen? Twenty, even?

How about £1.3m? That's all it would take to buy Patrick Kluivert from Barcelona. And there would be no negotiations, no hard sell, no player exchange, and virtually no need for agents (although, let's face it, at least one is bound to tag along).

According to Spanish transfer rules, every player has a buy-out clause, the official 'value' at which his club is obliged to sell. Normally, the clauses are prohibitively high – Zinedine Zidane's, for example, is £130m. However, while Kluivert's is £26m, it will fall to just £1.3m in July 2004 – and, unofficially, Barça will accept offers in the region of the lower figure in the January transfer window. The Dutchman will cost just an eighth of what, say, Liverpool shelled out for Emile Heskey, and a fourteenth of what Chelsea paid for Hernan Crespo. Barcelona won't be able to do anything. Indeed, they are the architects of the situation.

The men responsible are Joan Gaspart and Joan Laporta, Barça presidents past and present. When Rivaldo left for Milan in summer 2002, Gaspart was so desperate not to lose Kluivert as well that he increased his after-tax salary from £5m to £8.6m. Incoming president Laporta, equally desperate to resolve Barça's dire financial situation and not convinced by Kluivert, dropped that salary to £5.7m net. In return, it was agreed the Dutchman's buy-out value would come down too: he could leave for a pittance.

High price for goals

And yet nobody at cash-strapped Barça seems bothered. Kluivert has proven too expensive: every goal has cost the club £286,000, and his departure would save over £10m a year. Privately, board members have admitted they are sick of him, and manager Frank Rijkaard has said nothing to suggest he'll fight for Kluivert to stay. Kluivert himself, yet to score this season, appears determined to leave after the Camp Nou fans started booing and whistling him.

"It's as if they want me out. If it carries on, I'll have to leave," he told Spanish weekly *Don Balon*. "I can't play football like this. In 10 years as a professional, this is the first time I have been whistled by my own fans. I want to play in a team and in a stadium that applauds me, that supports me, and does the same for my team-mates. I want to play where people appreciate me, not where they don't want me."

It's no secret that Kluivert, who speaks perfect English, has been keen on a move to the Premiership for a couple of years. But whatever his next destination, his statement appeared to be a tool by which he could blame his departure on the fans rather than be seen to walk out.

The Dutchman insists he doesn't understand the whistles: "I don't know why [I don't connect with the fans]. I've always loved Barcelona. I accepted a pay cut to stay; I've done everything possible."

On the face of it, that surprise is well founded. Kluivert has averaged just under a goal every other game, scoring 16, 23, 25, 25 and 21 (in all competitions) during his five seasons at Barcelona – some of them real fantasy strikes. He is a player of remarkable touch, ability and elegance, a supplier as well as a finisher of goals. And he has learnt Catalan as well as Spanish. He's even a bit of a sex symbol.

But for all his ability, it's difficult to avoid the feeling that Kluivert has not peaked at Barcelona. Many fans remain unconvinced, even if some did display banners supporting him. To some extent, Kluivert is a victim of his very style: his effortless grace, the smoothness of his movement can give the impression (unfairly) of a man cruising his way through games, disinterested, posing. He doesn't fly into tackles or shake his fist – he can appear not to care.

His love of the high life doesn't help alter that perception. Nor did his absence from a club dinner because he was in England commentating on the recent Manchester United-Rangers game, or the debacle of the summer trip to the USA (Kluivert's criminal record for killing another driver in a car accident meant he was refused entry and had to fly back for a special visa, missing two of Barça's three matches).

Then there's the sense that Kluivert is not really the goalscorer Barça need: he's yet to score over 20 in the League in a season, a study showed only 13 of his strikes have been "decisive" (i.e. earned victory or a draw), and he is capable of the most comically awful misses.

Count the assists

But among the gaffes, much else goes unnoticed. As his Holland team-mate Roy Makaay put it: "In Spain, only the goals count; nobody cares about the assists. Kluivert is a super-forward but each year he only gets 15 League goals and everyone criticises him."

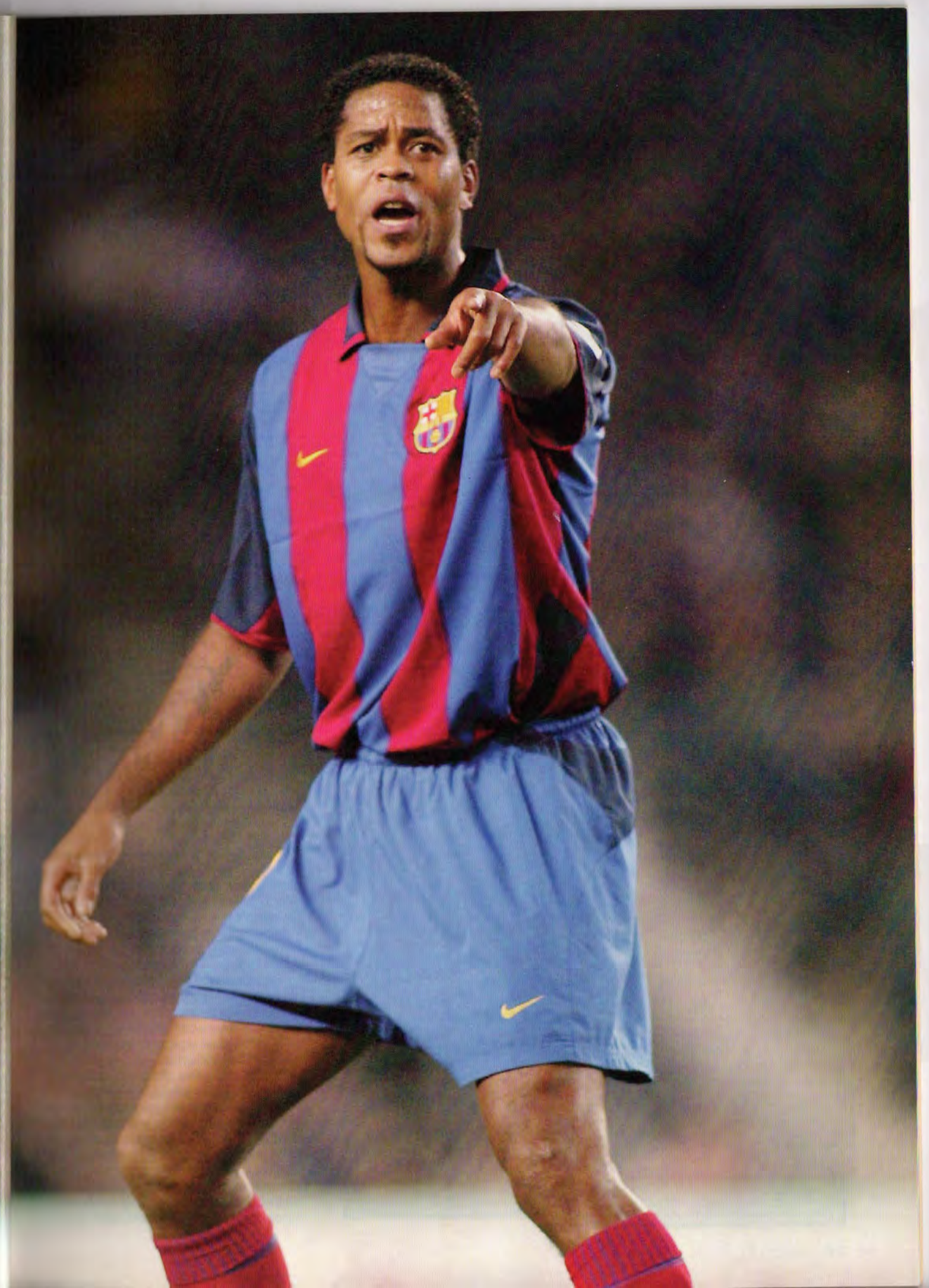
And that's the thing: few seem sure of Kluivert's best position. He is a paradox of a striker, one who can draw bizarre judgments, like that made by Juanma Lillo, the man Barça presidential candidate Luis Bassat wanted as coach. "Kluivert is the best striker in the world," said Lillo, "although finishing is not his strong point." He is an assist-maker, a footballer rather than an out-and-out goalscorer. And yet he does that from an advanced position instead of the traditional playmaker's role. He is better drifting in from deep or back from the front line, playing the ball off, holding it up, nipping in unnoticed.

'This is the first time I have been whistled by my own fans. I want to play in a stadium that applauds me'

Positionally, he is neither Ronaldo nor Ronaldinho, but a bit of both. Or, as the critics would have it, not enough of either. Kluivert himself seems convinced that he is better playing deeper – even when he's the lone front man. Infuriatingly for Barça fans, he can seem to be floating around when he should be in the box finishing off chances. Kluivert also lacks aggression and power.

Plus, of course there's the fact that Spanish fans love booing their own players, particularly those of whom they hold great expectations. Just ask Ronaldo or Rivaldo. All of which adds up to an outrageously talented striker, seemingly desperate to leave and a series of clubs – including Arsenal and Newcastle – rubbing their hands in glee.

Rarely has a player this good come so cheap.



Tartan talent

Gavin Willacy on the young duo raising Scottish hopes for the future

SCOTLAND PREPARED FOR their Euro 2004 play-off against Holland knowing that whatever the outcome, the best is yet to come from their young side.

After Craig Brown's ageing team peaked in the late 1990s, Scotland had to rebuild under Berti Vogts. The 21st century has so far been painful, with fans having to withstand a dire period as the German coach experimented with a string of youngsters.

But two of those – Manchester United midfielder Darren Fletcher and Everton forward James McFadden – are expected to lead the country into a new era.

Fletcher is rated so highly by his club manager, Sir Alex Ferguson, that he signed a new contract until 2007 on the same day he was called up to the Scotland squad to face Lithuania in a European qualifier. The 19-year-old appeared as a substitute in that game and within four minutes scored the goal that clinched a play-off place.

At the start of the season, Fletcher was little known. The departure of David Beckham to Real Madrid in the summer and Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's absence through injury enabled him to move up the pecking order but he still had to watch new boy Cristiano Ronaldo start the season on United's right flank. However, after a few weeks Ferguson decided to give the tall Scot an opportunity – one he took with a maturity beyond his years.

He made an impressive, if unspectacular, debut at Leicester and was rewarded with a home bow at Old Trafford a week later against Birmingham. He was considered by many to be man of the match in the 3-0 win and is now favoured ahead of both Ronaldo and another summer signing, David Bellion.

"He's a very intelligent player and has good balance," says Ferguson. "He's got some growing to do but hopefully he'll get the physique in the next couple of years."

Fletcher's international coaches are equally expectant. "He's one of the best-educated players I've seen for years, the best since Michael Ballack," says Under-21 coach Rainer Bonhof. "He's good with both feet, takes free-kicks, runs well and is dangerous in the box. He needs time to settle, but having Sir Alex as his coach helps a lot – there's a balance needed between pushing young players and resting them."

Up for the battle...McFadden takes on the Lithuania defence

'We've exposed the myth that there are no young Scots coming through'

Ferguson is always ready to give a promising youngster a chance but always surrounds the greenhorn with experience, rarely asks them to play more than one game a week, and usually against opponents he believes they can cope with. As with Beckham, Paul Scholes and the Nevilles, Fletcher is learning the ropes against mediocre Premiership opponents and in winnable cup-ties.

Far less exciting than the fancy Ronaldo, Fletcher is arguably more effective, taking up more advanced positions than Beckham did, always available to receive a pass, and keeping it simple. He could be accused of passing on responsibility at times, but rarely loses the ball and crosses when the opportunity arises. Above all, he is remarkably calm, considering he had to wait longer than expected for his chance, having broken the same toe five times.

McFadden, by comparison, was a teenage sensation at humble Motherwell before leaving Fir Park for Everton. His excellent record of 13 goals in 29 games for a side that finished bottom of the Scottish Premier League last season should have attracted far more illustrious bidders. But McFadden's reputation, tarnished when he went AWOL after making his Scotland debut last year in a Hong Kong tournament and augmented by the occasional sending-off, seemed to put them off.

Only Everton came up with an acceptable package, but, bizarrely, McFadden's arrival was seemingly undermined when manager David Moyes also signed another ambling left-winger, Kevin Kilbane, from Sunderland.

But Bonhof has no such doubts about the unpredictable 20-year-old, on or off the field.

"McFadden has a lot of talent – he's very good with the ball, cool in the box, always dangerous when dribbling and provides good crosses. The key is within himself – he mustn't stop his evolution. He needs to improve his right foot, and his heading is not 100 per cent, but he has a good personality and that is important."

Bonhof and Vogts shared McFadden over the past two years, as he flitted between the Under-21s and the new-look senior team in several low-key friendlies.

"Fletcher and McFadden are the best young talent in the United Kingdom," claims Vogts. "James can be even bigger than Wayne Rooney."

Fletcher declares: "We're going places. Look at me and James and the other young players in the team – we've exposed the myth that there are no young Scots coming through. Berti and Rainer knew it, and now the future's looking good for Scotland."

Nice timing...Fletcher celebrates the goal that took Scotland to the play-offs

FACT FILE

Darren FLETCHER
Club Manchester United (Eng)
Country Scotland
Born February 1, 1984, in Edinburgh
International debut August 2003, v Norway
International caps 2 (1 goal)

James McFADDEN
Club Everton (Eng)
Country Scotland
Born April 14, 1983, in Glasgow
Previous club Motherwell
International debut May 2002, v South Africa
International caps 7 (1 goal)

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Big in Bavaria

Bayern Munich's summer signing from Deportivo, the current ESM Golden Shoe holder, talks to Klaas-Jan Droppert

Striking impact...Makaay aims to help Bayern make amends for last season's Euro flop

WORLD SOCCER: How are you enjoying life in Munich?

ROY MAKAAY: It's going fine, but the expectations here are big. People expect Bayern to win every week, no matter how. In fact, it's said we will win the championship, just like that. And the supporters are already talking about the Champions League Final. After reaching at least the semi-finals for five consecutive years, being eliminated in the first round last season was a serious blow. We have to do better, but the fans forget that under the new format you could meet the favourites as soon as the second round.

They expected goals from you right from the start?

Yes, but they had to give me some time. Because the season in Spain finished late I had only trained for two weeks when I arrived. The advantage of Bayern is that so many former players work at the club. They knew I needed some time and like me they were never worried I wouldn't score for Bayern. Now I've already got seven goals in 10 matches.

But the media still criticise...

No matter how well Bayern play, it doesn't matter to the press. Last year the club won the title and the German Cup. For just one month, when Bayern were eliminated from the Champions League, they played badly, yet the press were on their backs for the entire season. When I arrived at the club I read articles that made me laugh. For instance, every day my transfer fee is mentioned – just in case there should be one reader who has forgotten that it was a club record £13.4 million.

Still, for a long time you weren't certain to go to Bayern.

That wasn't my fault, or Bayern's. La Coruna started to ask ridiculous money. At Deportivo, the chairman, Augusto Lendoiro, decides everything. He must have thought with Makaay being European top scorer he could ask more than the Beckham fee! Nice try! My agent, Rob Jansen, had been working on the move for three months. That's quite a long time. In the end La Coruna can't complain. They have doubled their profit.

But even when you were in Munich the deal could have fallen through.

I'd had the medical, and a presentation to the press was due to start. But then I heard there were problems. Until the last moment La Coruna tried to obstruct the deal by asking for more money. All I could do was wander around Munich waiting for the phone call that everything was OK. It just took a couple of extra days.

Having played for Tenerife for two years and Deportivo for four, did you want to leave Spain?

From the start Barcelona, Valencia and Bayern were the clubs interested in me. It was just a matter of which would come to terms with Deportivo first. Bayern contacted my agent back in May, but I wanted to wait until after the season. In the end I went to the biggest of them, one of the biggest in Europe. Barcelona are a famous name but Bayern are a better club. Barça have a fantastic team but they always seem to have problems. In my four years at La Coruna we always finished above them.

'I didn't worry about getting goals for Bayern; they knew all I needed was a little time'

Didn't you want to go to a top club sooner?

I've always had the ambition to play at the highest level. But with La Coruna we won the championship, the Cup and the Super Cup twice. I won everything I could in Spain. Despite everything I have no hard feelings against La Coruna. I'm still in touch with many of their players.

Being European top scorer isn't bad for your career either.

True, but I've put it all behind me now. Last year I had a super year. In some matches I didn't play so well but it seemed as soon as I got the ball it was a goal. I think I failed to score in only three games. It was a memorable moment when the great Eusebio handed me the Golden Shoe.

Do they understand in Munich why you're not in Holland's starting line-up?

Sometimes I get the feeling the press don't want to understand it for their own reasons. If you look at those who are first choice [Patrick Kluivert and Ruud Van Nistelrooy] then it's possible you'll start on the bench. I always come to the national squad wanting to play, and if that doesn't happen then I'm disappointed. But [coach] Dick Advocaat does what he thinks is best for the team.

But you must have noticed the Kluivert-Van Nistelrooy tandem isn't working.

I've played with Kluivert and it went well. But Kluivert, [Rafael] Van der Vaart or Van Nistelrooy – every combination is possible. It's true Van Nistelrooy and I are similar types of player. But why can't we play together? It's all a matter of approaching each other.

Will you finish your career in Munich?

It's too soon to say. I'll be 32 when my contract is up and I'll see what happens then. At the moment I'm happy here, and the main thing is to win as many trophies as possible with Bayern.

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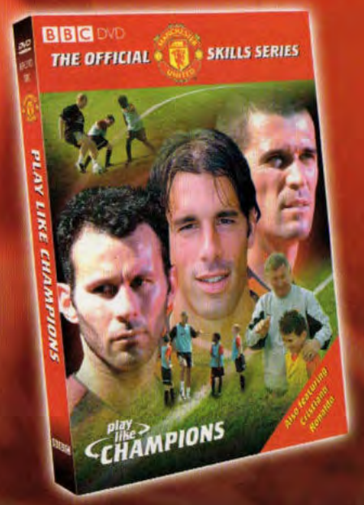

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French blessing

The former Real Madrid striker has settled well in Monaco. Keir Radnedge reports

FERNANDO MORIENTES never wanted to leave Real Madrid and his exalted position within the inner clique commanded by Raul, Guti and the now-departed former captain Fernando Hierro. But when the club signed Ronaldo 18 months ago the writing was on the wall.

He stayed around for a year and Madrid were happy to keep him, given the initial doubts over the Brazilian's long-term fitness. But Ronaldo ended his first term with 23 League goals, and youngster Javier Portillo underlined his ambition with a hatful of goals in the Spanish Cup.

Reluctantly, Morientes had to accept there was no place for him among the *Galacticos*. Madrid agreed to release him on loan, and offers flooded in, but Morientes set his sights high. He wanted conditions similar to those at Madrid – which meant Champions League football.

None of the offers suited. But then, on the eve of the transfer deadline in August, Monaco came calling. Top scorer Shabani Nonda had suffered serious knee damage and they needed a top-quality striker to maintain their domestic title challenge and further their Champions League ambitions.

Morientes says: "I was linked with a number of clubs – Roma, Tottenham and so on. Monaco was the last offer but also the most attractive.

"I did not want to stay in Spain. If I had to leave Madrid then I wanted to test myself in another country. I was told good things about Monaco, both as a place to live and as a football club. Also, one of my priorities, apart from playing in the Champions League, was to join a club that would be challenging for their League title. On both counts that's Monaco."

Morientes feels no bitterness at his ousting from the Bernabeu. "What happened to me happens to lots of players," he says. "I have always been very proud of what I achieved for Madrid and I will always have a special feeling for the club."

That is not surprising since Morientes helped Madrid win three Champions Leagues, and his performances for the team provided him with the springboard to play in the World Cup finals. That also means he does not believe he has anything to prove. Anyway, he is only due to stay at Monaco for a year, so his targets are short-term: "To help the club go a long way in Europe and finish in the Champions League qualifying places again in France. I've shown what sort of a player I am. Of course, there are always areas of my game in which I can improve, but I don't think there's anything more I need prove to anyone."

'If I had to leave Madrid I wanted to test myself in another country – and I heard good things about Monaco'

But he believes playing in France has helped bring a new dimension to his game – an ability to provide assists to his team-mates to score.

Coach Didier Deschamps is thrilled with his new striker's selfless work. Morientes says: "I've always been accepted as a penalty-box player dependent on team-mates for chances. But in France I have more space in which to work. So while I always want to score, if a team-mate's in a better position I'll pass. I'm not selfish, it's just a matter of style. I have a lot of time for Deschamps. Although he's still comparatively young, he knows what he's doing."

Champions League competition has even taken Morientes back to Spain, to play Deportivo La Coruna, where Monaco lost 1-0. He still enjoyed the homecoming, saying: "For one thing, I could understand everything everyone was saying! Some people don't understand the problems the language difficulty causes when a player goes abroad. It affects everything you do, on and off the pitch.

"It was a bit strange playing in Spain in those circumstances. Nothing like as unusual, though, if we had been playing Real in Madrid. If that does happen then I hope it's as far into the competition as possible because, for me, Madrid are clear favourites. So the later we play each other, the better it will have been for Monaco."

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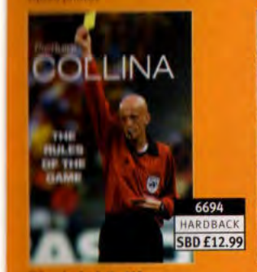
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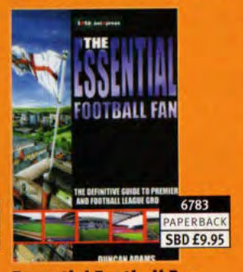
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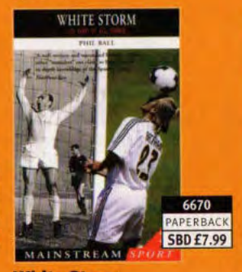
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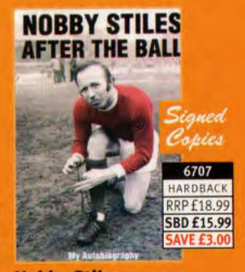
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WSocNOV03

Potential dynamite

The Danes should not be underestimated and could surprise again, says Jim Holden

DENMARK WILL BE a team every nation prefers to avoid when the draw for the Euro 2004 finals is made. Under the impressive and intelligent guidance of coach Morten Olsen they have lost just two competitive matches in four years and developed an intensely strong team spirit and togetherness.

The core of the current team has been in place since the turn of the century – Thomas Sorensen in goal, the centre-back partnership of Rene Henriksen and Martin Laursen, the attacking bunch of speedy wingers – Dennis Rommedahl, Jesper Gronkjaer and Martin Jorgensen – and strikers Ebbe Sand and Jon Dahl Tomasson.

This is a team comfortable with themselves and their place in continental soccer; a team lacking superstars but one that's hard to beat and with the flair and goalscoring prowess to be considered possible champions if momentum and luck swing their way. Certainly, no one makes the mistake now of writing off a Denmark team after the fairytale European Championship triumph of 1992. Then, the players were called from their holidays on the beach to replace Yugoslavia in the finals and won the tournament.

Good guide...Morten Olsen

Evasive action...Martin Jorgensen gets away from Ralph Ferron in the home qualifier against Luxembourg

There was just one serious stutter in this qualifying campaign, a shock 2-0 home defeat by emerging Bosnia-Herzegovina, which meant the Danes had to tough out a draw away to the same opposition in the final game.

Great potential

More significant, surely, was the extraordinary 5-2 victory away to the talented Romanians, a 'big' result that emphasised the side's potential.

Olsen, however, will always play down heady talk. Showmanship isn't his style. "We'll prepare in the right way and see where it takes us," says the man who played libero in the famous Dynamite side of the 1980s. "I think it's foolish to make predictions. We played some good games in qualification, and we had some with problems. But that's quite normal."

The problems – that Bosnia defeat and a home draw against Romania – brought much criticism in the Danish media, and Olsen was so furious at one point that he considered resigning. One of the main lines of attack has been that the team are too stereotyped in their 4-3-3 formation.

Skipper Henriksen understands the charge but rejects it. "Maybe people have got used to our strategy, but it's a system that has worked very well for four years under Morten," says the Panathinaikos defender. "You don't finish top of such a difficult qualifying group if you are not doing many things right. I think the critics should judge over the long period rather than on poor performances in individual matches.

First-choice forward...Ebbe Sand

Speedy...Jesper Gronkjaer

"We are not Brazil, but the fact is that we keep qualifying for all the tournaments, and that is a great achievement for a small country. [This is the fifth successive qualification for a major finals.] At the moment I would say there are three or four really good nations in European football and that we are in the group just below that.

"Realistically, we should not beat those elite teams like France. But we can win if we play to our very best and they don't have a good day. We overcame the French in the World Cup, remember. I am certainly determined to enjoy Portugal because at the age of 34 this is likely to be my last tournament, and also because we have some fine young players developing in Denmark."

Much of the speculation about the Danish side now surrounds the possibility of youngsters barging their way into the team. Olsen is likely to learn little from this month's friendly against England at Old Trafford, although revenge for the 3-0 loss in the 2002 World Cup second round showdown would be pleasant enough for a proud man.

New blood

Far more significant will be the Euro Under-21 play-off matches home and away against Italy, also in November. Goalkeeper Stephan Andersen of AB Copenhagen is viewed by many as a major discovery, while midfielders Thomas Kahlenberg and Martin Retov, both of Brondby, are also pushing hard for a place in the Euro 2004 squad, and maybe the starting line-up too. Striker Tommy Bechmann from Esbjerg is another young hopeful with great potential.

Maybe an injection of youth is just what Denmark need to add a touch of the unexpected to the tried and trusted formula of Olsen. As it stands, they will be a team to be avoided but a team likely to be knocked out in the quarter-finals. However, add in one or two genuine fresh talents and the cocktail may be potent enough for a real surprise in Portugal next summer.

THE SQUAD

	CLUB	DOB	CAPS	GLS
GOALKEEPERS				
Stephan ANDERSEN	AB Copenhagen	26.11.81	0	0
Peter SKOV-JENSEN	Midtjylland	09.06.71	2	0
Thomas SORENSEN	Aston Villa (Eng)	12.06.76	30	0
DEFENDERS				
Martin ALBRECHTSEN	FC Copenhagen	31.03.80	3	0
Kasper BOGELUND	PSV Eindhoven (Hol)	08.10.80	8	0
Thomas HELVEG	Internazionale (Ita)	24.06.71	79	2
Rene HENRIKSEN	Panathinaikos (Gre)	27.08.69	56	0
Niclas JENSEN	Borussia Dortmund (Ger)	17.08.74	24	0
Per KROLDRUP	Udinese (Ita)	31.07.79	0	0
Martin LAURSEN	Milan (Ita)	26.07.77	30	1
Per NIELSEN	Brondby	15.10.73	3	0
Brian PRISKE	Genk (Blg)	14.05.77	2	0
Asbjorn SENNELS	Viborg	17.01.79	1	0
MIDFIELDERS				
Thomas GRAVESEN	Everton (Eng)	11.03.76	40	5
Jesper GRONKJAER	Chelsea (Eng)	12.08.77	40	4
Claus JENSEN	Charlton (Eng)	29.04.77	25	5
Martin JORGENSEN	Udinese (Ita)	06.10.75	45	5
Thomas KAHLENBERG	Brondby	20.03.83	1	0
Thomas Roll LARSEN	FC Copenhagen	12.03.77	7	1
Jan MICHAELSEN	Panathinaikos (Gre)	28.11.70	18	1
Christian POULSEN	Schalke (Ger)	28.02.80	16	0
Martin RETOV	Brondby	05.05.80	0	0
Dennis ROMMEDAHL	PSV Eindhoven (Hol)	22.07.78	37	9
Morten WIEGHORST	Brondby	25.02.71	28	3
FORWARDS				
Tommy BECHMANN	Esbjerg	22.12.81	0	0
Peter LOVENKRANDS	Rangers (Sco)	29.01.80	8	0
Peter MADSEN	Bochum (Ger)	26.04.78	5	0
David RASMUSSEN	Nordsjaelland	01.12.76	0	0
Ebbe SAND	Schalke (Ger)	19.07.72	58	20
Jon Dahl TOMASSON	Milan (Ita)	29.08.76	54	26

Caps and goals up to and including Bosnia-Herzegovina v Denmark (11.10.03)

Nowhere to hide

Nick Bidwell reports on the pressures facing Rudi Voller's men

GERMAN NATIONAL TEAM boss Rudi Voller and his players know full well there will be no hiding place should they underperform at Euro 2004.

Although Germany were one of just four countries to remain unbeaten en route to Portugal, they were for the most part unconvincing. The team came under particularly heavy media fire after a 1-1 home draw with Lithuania, the 2-0 win in the Faroes – when only late goals from Fredi Bobic and Miroslav Klose saved the day – and a drab goalless draw in Iceland.

Indeed, it was in a Reykjavik TV studio in September that months of relentless criticism from pundits such as Gunter Netzer, Franz Beckenbauer, Paul Breitner and Udo Lattek finally brought Voller to boiling point. Seething with rage, he rounded on his detractors, notably telling one reporter that he would be better suited to work on a game show and slamming another for a post-match drinking session. (TV presenter Waldemar Hartmann denied the charge but received a part in a beer commercial as compensation.)

"All these experts are getting to me," stormed Voller. "Gunter Netzer says his old Germany team might have played one bad game but then they would put in 10 great ones. I would have liked to see those. The reporting of the game today has been a scandal. We played badly and were lucky not to lose. But the attacks have gone too far. I will not put up with this rubbish. Of course I criticise my team but at the same time I must protect them."

More committed, incisive performances in later home wins over Scotland (2-1) and Iceland (3-0) helped clinch qualification and lower Voller's blood pressure. Yet no one in Germany is under any illusion that much work needs to be done if the national team are not to relive their Euro 2000 nightmare. They were eliminated in the first round of that tournament without winning a game.

If anyone assumed Germany would be reinvigorated by reaching the 2002 World Cup Final, they have been sorely disappointed. They did top their Euro 2004 qualifying group, but at times have seemed in total disarray, lacking penetration on the flanks, midfield creativity, ball-winning capacity – a cardinal sin in German football – and many other basics. There have been far too many misplaced short passes and crosses,

Ratings game...Voller is a Bobic fan

while poor ball control and defensive lapses are also much too common. The *Nationalmannschaft* also find it hard to maintain a high tempo and are simply not direct enough. While their 3-5-2 system oozes discipline, tactical flexibility is at a premium.

With all that in mind, it is not hard to understand why Germany have experienced so many problems recently with supposedly inferior opposition.

Not enough leaders

Incredibly for a football nation that used to have a production line of players with strong characters, the current Germany side can be rather passive. Star midfielder Michael Ballack claimed earlier this year that they did not have enough leaders on the pitch, and he was right. Apart from irascible keeper and captain Oliver Kahn and Ballack himself, this is not exactly a team rich in imposing, inspirational personalities.

Germany are not, however, without their assets. Despite not being his usual imperious self this autumn, Kahn remains an outstanding keeper and a man for the big occasion; Dortmund centre-back Christian Worns has emerged as the true bulwark of the defence; and the dexterity on the ball of Leverkusen midfielder Bernd Schneider represents a major attacking weapon – though he is arguably more effective centrally than on the right. As for Ballack, he is one of Europe's foremost midfielders, both an imaginative creator and consummate finisher. With him in their midst, Germany cannot be written off.

The outlook is reasonably bright up front too. With Klose and Oliver Neuville struggling to rediscover the form they showed at the World Cup, Voller was looking at an attacking black hole. But to the rescue has come young Stuttgart striker Kevin Kuranyi and 31-year-old Bobic, of Hertha Berlin.

Bobic, tried and eventually rejected by former Germany coach Berti Vogts in the late 1990s, was recalled a year ago and has looked anything but an international misfit. He has led the line intelligently and notched four Euro 2004 qualifying goals, including a magnificent volley in the 3-0 win over Iceland in Hamburg. Beckenbauer does not rate him; Voller thinks differently.

As for Kuranyi, who opened his national team account with a tap-in against Iceland, there is no divergence of views. Universally tipped for the top, the 21-year-old has the attributes – physical presence, strength in the air, elusiveness and sharp finishing – to prosper at the highest level.

Kuranyi is by no means the only fresh face to break though since the last World Cup. Last season and this,

Tipped for the top...Kevin Kuranyi

Voller has awarded first caps to a dozen players. Of those, Stuttgart right wing-back Andreas Hinkel, Bayern Munich left-back Tobias Rau and Werder Bremen defensive midfielder Fabian Ernst seem likely to feature for a long time to come.

While the fearless enthusiasm of Voller's new boys could prove most useful in Portugal, arguably even more important to German hopes will be the exorcising of the squad's injury curse. The coach can look forward to the return of such long-term absentees as Dortmund central defender Christoph Metzelder (Achilles tendon), Leverkusen sweeper Jens Nowotny – who has endured two cruciate ligament operations – Liverpool midfield strategist Didi Hamann (shin), invaluable Dortmund utility man Torsten Frings (cruciate ligaments), and Tottenham left wing-back Christian Ziege (thigh).

A fully-operational Sebastian Deisler would also provide a massive boost. Should the young Bayern Munich attacking midfielder steer clear of the knee and other physical problems that have plagued him for the past two years, his imagination and easy technique would offer much-needed variety to Germany's often one-dimensional approach play.

"When we have everybody back, there's no doubt we have a strong squad," says Worns. "We can go to Portugal with optimism. I'm convinced we'll be ready for the challenge. Pressure situations bring out the best in us." That theory will be put to the test next summer.

THE SQUAD

	CLUB	DOB	CAPS	GLS
GOALKEEPERS				
Oliver KAHN	Bayern Munich	15.06.69	64	0
Jens LEHMANN	Arsenal (Eng)	10.11.69	16	0
Frank ROST	Schalke	30.06.73	4	0
DEFENDERS				
Frank BAUMANN	Werder Bremen	29.10.75	20	2
Arne FRIEDRICH	Hertha Berlin	29.05.79	13	0
Andreas HINKEL	Stuttgart	26.03.82	4	0
Christoph METZELDER	Borussia Dortmund	05.11.80	16	0
Jens NOWOTNY	Bayer Leverkusen	11.01.74	37	0
Christian RAHN	Hamburg	15.06.79	4	0
Tobias RAU	Bayern Munich	31.12.81	7	1
Marko REHMER	Hertha Berlin	29.04.72	34	4
Christian WORNS	Borussia Dortmund	10.05.72	51	0
MIDFIELDERS				
Michael BALLACK	Bayern Munich	26.08.76	36	14
Daniel BIEROFKA	Bayer Leverkusen	07.02.79	3	1
Sebastian DEISLER	Bayern Munich	05.01.80	20	3
Fabian ERNST	Werder Bremen	30.05.79	2	0
Torsten FRINGS	Borussia Dortmund	22.01.76	23	2
Dietmar HAMANN	Liverpool (Eng)	27.08.73	49	4
Michael HARTMANN	Hertha Berlin	11.07.74	4	0
Jens JEREMIES	Bayern Munich	05.03.74	49	1
Sebastian KEHL	Borussia Dortmund	13.02.80	21	3
Carsten RAMELOW	Bayer Leverkusen	20.03.74	44	2
Bernd SCHNEIDER	Bayer Leverkusen	17.11.73	30	1
Christian ZIEGE	Tottenham (Eng)	01.02.72	71	9
FORWARDS				
Fredi BOBIC	Hertha Berlin	30.10.71	29	9
Paul FREIER	Bochum	26.07.79	12	1
Miroslav KLOSE	Kaiserslautern	09.06.78	33	15
Kevin KURANYI	Stuttgart	02.03.82	6	1
Benjamin LAUTH	1860 Munich	04.08.81	4	0
Oliver NEUVILLE	Bayer Leverkusen	01.05.73	46	4

Caps and goals up to and including Germany v Iceland (11.10.03)

Leader of the pack...Michael Ballack is one of the few inspirational figures in the current Germany set-up

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Keir Radnedge **COMMENTARY**

Chinese whispers

Heard the one about the English club who are still hoping to be big in the Far East?

WHEN ENGLISH CLUB Everton signed a £1million-a-year sponsorship deal with Chinese telecommunications giant Kejian – which included the signing of China's Li Tie – they claimed to be ideally placed to develop a large and lucrative following in the world's most populous country.

They told their success-starved fans they expected to make a significant amount of money from such a large potential market. But potential is all the Chinese market is at the moment.

When Junichi Inamoto signed for Arsenal only to spend most of his time in the reserves, cynics saw it as proof that the deal was made simply to sell a load of Arsenal shirts in Japan.

Marketing ploy?...Li Tie has yet to cement a regular spot at Everton

If Everton had a similar aim in signing Li Tie, they will be disappointed. In Shanghai, home of two of the best teams in China this season – Shanghai Shenhua and International Shanghai (until recently Shanghai Zhongyuan) – legitimate sports goods are almost impossible to come by.

China is infamous for its thriving street market in fake products, and this extends to football shirts of the top western teams adorning Xiangyang market in Shanghai. Searching the market carefully reveals, however, that you cannot even buy fake Everton shirts among a selection that does include Real Madrid, Barcelona, Juventus, Chelsea, Arsenal, Liverpool, England, Japan and Brazil.

On the Great Sports Channel, the local Shanghai sports network, four teams have their badges displayed on the Premier League show's studio background – Manchester United, Manchester City, Chelsea and Everton. Unfortunately for Everton, their logo is almost always blocked out by the head of the anchor man.

At the time of Li Tie's signing Everton were swiftly labelled "the most popular team in China, even ahead of Manchester United".

In fact, not only are Everton certainly behind United (Beckham or no Beckham), but they are also probably below Manchester City. City's Chinese defender Sun Jihai is at least a first-team regular; more than can be said for Li Tie at Goodison.

Not so popular

Further embarrassment came on October 19, when Everton v Southampton was scheduled to be the live game on Great Sports. The station often runs a fan phone vote to choose whether to show Serie A or the Premiership, but anyone tuning in at 11pm local time expecting to see "the most popular team in China" would instead have found themselves watching Ancona v Juventus.

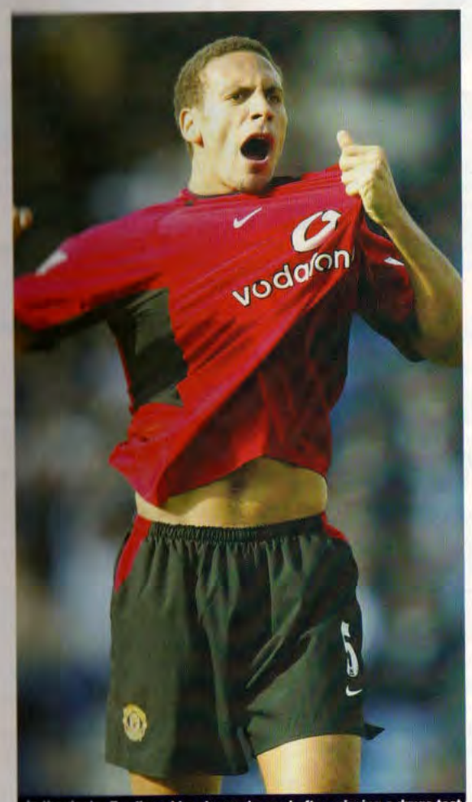
Popular media hype points to China as the next point of expansion for European clubs, and there is some rationale behind it. Football is popular in the country, and clubs are keen to build up a following in readiness for the day when the economy develops enough so fans can afford the official shirts, flags, badges and lunchboxes in their favourite foreign team's colours. At present, a Chinese football fan cannot even afford tickets for the sparsely-attended domestic League matches, let alone the £40 needed for a real Premier League shirt.

Everton are used in Kejian's billboard advertising in China, but in Shanghai this mostly takes the form of a tastefully small logo in the bottom corner of the advert. At least most of the bus stops in Nanjing have huge posters of Li Tie in Everton colours promoting the latest generation of Kejian mobile phones.

The idea has to be more about raising profile at an entry level so that, by the time football is big business in China, Everton will have developed a strong presence.

As part of the sponsorship deal, Everton are supposed to visit China at some point (at Kejian's expense), though when this will be following last summer's SARS-inspired cancellation remains to be seen.

That might do more than any TV coverage to cement a following – as Manchester United and Real Madrid have demonstrated.



In the dock...Ferdinand has been charged after missing a drugs test

Don't blame it on Rio

THE INSTANT THAT anyone mentions the word 'drugs' we are, it seems, expected to leap to attention, pull on our longest po-faces and peer up into the sky in case the wrath of FIFA should be about to descend in a Blatterite thunderbolt.

This is, after all, the issue threatening to destroy the credibility of sport, while also threatening its funding, as sponsors would hardly be inclined to associate themselves with activities in which cheating appeared to be rife.

The judgment of Rio Ferdinand (never mind the far less significant Judgment of Solomon) will be perused microscopically by venerable medical gods such as FIFA's Jiri Dvorak and Dick Pound. The latter turns up like a cardboard cut-out of himself in so many guises – one day as No 2 in the International Olympic Committee, another day as the Vengeance of WADA, the World Anti-Doping Agency.

So, tell me then, if Ferdinand is the greatest doping scandal since Ben Johnson (never mind all the ones who got away – they were really the greatest scandals of all), why are the world's most all-powerful, all-seeing, all-knowing, all-concerned sports authorities not threatening hellfire and damnation to Spain and Italy?

Serious cases

Here we find two ongoing cases that are far more serious than the Ferdinand issue. Yet, to all intents and purposes, they are being virtually ignored by the people supposedly poised to tow English football and Manchester United far out into the Atlantic and cast them adrift.

The Spanish case centres on Athletic Bilbao midfielder Carlos Gurpegi who tested positive for nandrolone after a match at the start of last season (see page 17).

Intriguingly, there have been no suggestions FIFA is waiting to pounce on Gurpegi, in particular, or Bilbao and the Spanish federation in general.

In Italy, for most of this year, a case has been rumbling on in Turin in which Riccardo Agricola and Antonio Giraudo, head doctor and executive administrator of Juventus, are on trial for 'sporting fraud' – the administration of illegal substances to gain sporting advantage.

The case was launched after an outspoken attack on the drug culture by coach Zdenek Zeman prompted an investigation by Turin magistrate Raffaelle Guariniello.

A raid on Juventus offices at the old Stadio Communale, which they used for training, turned up no fewer than 281 different forms of medicaments. A host of scientific and administrative experts have given evidence, plus various big-name players from the mid-1980s to1990s including Michel Platini, Zinedine Zidane and Gianluca Vialli.

Vialli's evidence pointed up a number of cocktails supposed to assist in muscle resistance, breathing and inflammation reduction. Some of the evidence from the former players has been so contradictory that the judge has issued formal warnings about the serious nature of evidence on oath. He may also recall various witnesses.

About the only thing to which football people ever own up is the use of creatine. But that is a substance produced naturally so nobody takes it seriously any longer, though it had its adherents, such as Real Madrid, Arsene Wenger and Glenn Hoddle.

The Turin trial will go on much longer and then be subject to wearily predictable delays and appeals. Whether any formal verdict will ever be signed and sealed must be in doubt.

And is FIFA on guard? Are WADA spies surrounding the building? Not that anyone has noticed.

Judgment Day

So back to poor young Ferdinand. I have no professional sympathy for him. Dope-testing is important. He should have been there. United, in my opinion, should have been protecting their interests to ensure so demonstrably forgetful a young man kept his appointment.

But we all make mistakes.

So, here's a little advice for United and Ferdinand when it comes to Judgment Day down at Soho Square: take a clove of garlic, a crucifix and a large wooden stake and answer the verdict with the words: "Gurpegi, Agricola, Giraudo."

It may not do much practical good. But it would, at the least, strike a verbal blow against hypocrisy.

Young guns v Gulf vets

At last the United Arab Emirates is to get its chance to shine. The World Youth Cup, postponed earlier this year because of the Iraq war, starts at the end of November. It should make an interesting contrast to neighbouring Qatar, where the World Oldies Championship – starring Batistuta, Effenberg and co – is now up and running.

Positive test...Ghaddafi

Joke is on Ghaddafi

When Al-Saadi Ghaddafi arrived for pre-season training with Perugia he brought along his ex-personal coach to help him catch up on fitness.

Since he was none other than Ben Johnson, the other players were soon jokingly asking for help with their sprint techniques. Now the joke has turned sour.

Ghaddafi may not have lined up in Serie A but even substitutes can be drug-tested – as he found out after the October 5 game with Reggina. Result: positive for nandrolone. Ghaddafi's career in *calcio* looks over before it has started.

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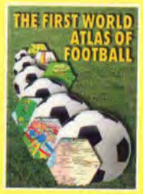

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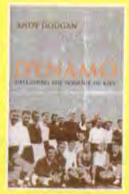

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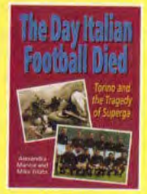

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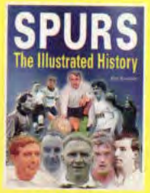

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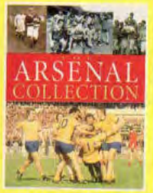

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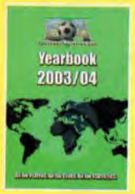

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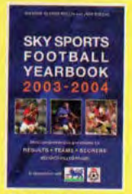

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Prophet and loss

Visionary English coach Jimmy Hogan did his best work abroad, writes Brian Glanville

Passionate...Hogan

JIMMY HOGAN was surely the most remarkable, versatile and successful football coach the game has ever seen, though largely and shamefully disregarded in England, his home country.

The title of Norman Fox's biography, *Prophet Or Traitor?* (Parrs Wood Press, £9.95), does justice neither to Hogan nor to the excellent, admirably researched book. *Prophet Without Honour* would have been a much better title, evoking the old Latin saying 'No one is a prophet in his own country'.

Thus, though Hogan was co-opted to run coaching courses shortly before the Second World War by FA secretary Stanley Rous and also managed his old club Fulham and Aston Villa, it was in Europe that he was revered.

He has always been credited as the true architect of the great Austrian inter-war Wunderteam, under the tutelage of dynamic banker Hugo Meisl. The Hungarians also revered Hogan as the architect of their game following his work with Budapest's MTK club. However, Fox knocks on the head the long-held belief that when Hungary came to Wembley and thrashed England 6-3 in November 1953 – the first ever victory of a genuinely foreign team on English soil – Hogan sat in the royal box at the invitation of the Hungarian federation rather than the FA. Not only that, but in fact he sat in the stand.

> 'He insisted English players were the most talented in the world, but simply were not getting the right coaching'

Against all the odds, and appearances, Hogan insisted to the end that English footballers were the most talented in the world, but simply were not getting the right coaching. It was all too true that until well after the Second World War, professional training largely consisted of running endlessly round the pitch, a bit of head tennis were you with Arsenal, and no sight, insanely, of the ball. The daft theory was that if a player didn't see it during the week, he would be all the more eager to get it on the Saturday.

Hogan's belief in coaching was passionate and profound, yet historically, one can see now that coaching can never be an end in itself. It is all very well if every coach is a Hogan, a superbly adroit ball player whom I met as an old man, in a bleak London school, giving a virtuoso display of his skills. But, alas, a Hogan is a rarity.

With his love of the short pass, his abomination of the mindless long ball, what would Hogan have made of the FA coaching department under the ineffable Charlie Hughes, guru of Direct Football? A primitive tactic that was foisted ruthlessly on the whole English coaching establishment.

When Hogan and Meisl brought the Wunderteam to London to meet England in 1932, the visiting party were shocked by the way that, on the previous Saturday, Chelsea and Everton both banged the ball constantly down the middle to respective centre-forwards Hughie Gallacher and Dixie Dean. The next Wednesday, the Wunderteam largely gave England a chasing with their elegant football, but still contrived to lose, 4-3.

There is no doubt that Hogan laid the basis for Hungary's marvellous Puskas-Kocsis-Hidegkuti team which beat England at Wembley, 7-1 the following spring in Budapest, and should have won the 1954 World Cup. Yet Comes The Revolution, as they used to say about Russia, and what happens? In 1956, Puskas, Kocsis and Czibor, another of the Magical Magyars, defected when on tour abroad with club side Honved.

That was effectively the end of Hungary's domination, and by the 1958 World Cup they were an ordinary side. Jozef Bozsik, scorer of Hungary's fifth goal at Wembley, and hat-trick man Nandor Hidegkuti were now played-out and slow, and the defence given to brutal challenges.

Hogan would always tell you that he learned his philosophy of the game as a young professional with Fulham, where he was fascinated by the outlook and approach of a clutch of Scottish players. As Fox tells us, his particular idol was a wing-half called Billy Goldie, whose company and advice he constantly sought, frequently turning up unannounced at the patient Goldie's house to talk endlessly about the game. Thus it was Scottish football that not only revolutionised the sport in Britain, with its invention in the 19th century of the passing game, but Scottish football that, through Hogan, went out to conquer Europe. "Don't kick it, stroke it!" Hogan once heard a man encouraging a group of footballing boys as he strolled through Vienna. Long afterwards, when he was coaching the juniors at Celtic, Hogan invited Goldie to come to see his pupils. "We showed him the type of football he had taught me in the old days," said the Englishman.

Born in the Lancashire town of Nelson, Hogan would play for nearby Bolton, Burnley and Rochdale. A promising inside-forward, he suffered a bad knee injury at Fulham which affected the rest of his playing career. On the Continent, he first coached in Holland at Dordrecht. In Vienna, he began uneasily, aware that he somehow wasn't getting through to his players, but an intense, long conversation with Meisl put him on the right road.

He then had great success in Dresden, where Richard Hofmann flourished into a German international under his aegis and Helmut Schoen, a World Cup-winning coach, was his devoted protege.

Hogan's influence was wide and enormous but when he managed Aston Villa in the 1930s and 40s, their chairman told him: "Get the ball in the bloody net, that's what I want!"

The fight against philistinism was unending, but who could have suspected that the FA would harbour it in years to come?

Day of destiny...Hungary take the field with England at Wembley before their 6-3 victory

Grounds for optimism

Exciting new stadiums take centre stage in 2004

AufSchalke Arena, Gelsenkirchen

FOOTBALL IS A fast-moving sport – and never more so than when it comes to stadium design and construction.

Next year, the major events will be played in some of the world's most modern, state-of-the-art stadiums. The UEFA Champions League Final will be played in the futuristic AufSchalke Arena in Gelsenkirchen, Germany, with its sliding roof and sliding pitch. A fortnight later, the Euro 2004 finals kick off in Portugal, with the tournament being staged in 10 brand new stadiums.

In fact, new stadiums are being planned across Europe as football enters a brave new age. In the UK, the new Wembley is fast taking shape and should be staging matches by early 2006. In Germany, new stadiums are being constructed to host the 2006 World Cup.

In Portugal, almost 4,000 people have worked on the construction of the Euro 2004 stadiums. They range from project managers, responsible for overseeing all the stadium construction work and the infrastructure around it – like new roads and bridges – to structural engineers, who design things like the roof elements, and infield specialists, who lay down the pitches. Before work even started on the stadiums, ground workers will have cleared the site; after the main build, finishing touches will have been made by bricklayers, electricians and painters and decorators.

Estadio Dragao, Oporto

Estadio Jose Alvalade, Lisbon

In the UK, in addition to the new Wembley, there are plans to build new stadiums for Arsenal and Liverpool. In fact, around 76,000 people are going to be needed in the UK construction industry in each of the next three years to build everything from football stadiums to new hospitals and schools, covering a whole host of skills.

If you want to find out more about careers in construction, visit www.bconstructive.co.uk or phone free on 0808 100 0055.

CONSTRUCTIVE
www.bconstructive.co.uk.

CAMP NOU GETS YOUR VOTE

WORLD SOCCER readers and www.worldsoccer.com visitors have voted Barcelona's Camp Nou their favourite stadium. Real Madrid's Santiago Bernabeu finished second in the poll, followed by Milan's San Siro.

The CITB-ConstructionSkills competition to name the world's favourite football stadium, run in our October issue, was won by Jon Schofield of East Finchley, London. His prize is a trip for two to see a top game at Camp Nou.

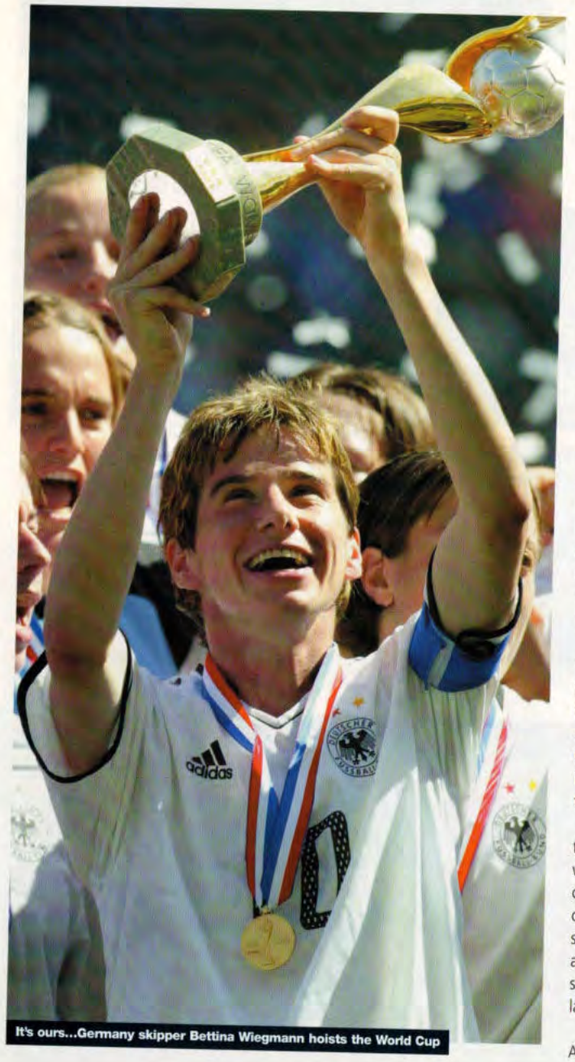
DIGEST

NEWS AND REPORTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

WS WORLD SOCCER

Professionalism pays off

Brian Straus reports on Germany's deserved victory in the fourth Women's World Cup



It's ours...Germany skipper Bettina Wiegmann hoists the World Cup

THE NUMBER OF Germans who tuned in to watch unheralded reserve defender Nia Kuenzer head her country to a much-deserved Women's World Cup title slightly exceeded the total that caught the *Nationalmannschaft's* Euro 2004 qualifier the previous day. In Sweden, nearly half the population saw their side settle for silver.

And under the late morning sun in suburban Los Angeles, where the tournament concluded on October 12, more than 26,000 fans showed up at the glittering Home Depot Center stadium to watch two teams not dressed in red, white and blue play for the nascent sport's ultimate prize.

The SARS virus forced FIFA to transfer the fourth Women's World Cup from China to the United States last spring, giving the new hosts less than four months to make arrangements. So it was clear the championship could not be a reprise of 1999, when record crowds and an enchanted media showered unprecedented attention on Mia Hamm, Sun Wen and co.

On top of that, the Women's United Soccer Association (WUSA) – the three-year-old circuit that was the sport's first fully-professional league – folded abruptly just five days before the World Cup opener. This made it obvious that interest in more sustained doses of the women's game remained tepid.

But the enthusiasm that permeated that mid-October day and the supporters who filled the six venues throughout a competition held during the most crowded portion of the domestic sports calendar did reveal an appreciation for high drama and surprise. This World Cup delivered the latter elements in abundance.

The intrigue commenced in early April, when the SARS virus delayed the Asian qualifiers and questions were raised about China's suitability as hosts. Several nations quietly offered to stage the World Cup, but the United States always was the most realistic option. Although still struggling to assert themselves consistently on the playing field, the Americans' infrastructure and organisational acumen are *nonpareil*.

China graciously stepped aside and was awarded the 2007 edition, while the United States Soccer Federation set out to identify and secure stadiums, solidify its financing and generate public interest. By mid-June, the schedule and venues were in place and the anticipation started to build. Then, three months later, all the optimism dissolved.

Credibility jolt

On September 16, three weeks after the conclusion of its third season, the eight-team WUSA announced it was ceasing operations because of a crippling lack of corporate sponsorship. Norway and France, whose top players were WUSA veterans, were just days away from kicking off the World Cup in Philadelphia, yet suddenly the sport that had struggled for so long to win over the American public and media was suffering yet another jolt to its credibility.

The scrutiny and pressure under which the reigning champions operated increased dramatically. Already faced with the World Cup's most arduous travel schedule, the most difficult first-round group and questions concerning the age of the team's most marketable players, the American squad took it on themselves to rekindle interest in professional women's soccer, cultivate new sponsorship and save their League by putting on another unforgettable performance. It was a lot to ask.

Perhaps the public was fired up by the hosts' desperate resolve, as more than 34,000 arrived at Washington DC's RFK Stadium to see the United States open against Sweden. The imposing Americans revealed their intentions in an easy 3-1 triumph orchestrated by veterans Hamm and Kristine Lilly, physically dominating the tentative Swedes and proving nearly unstoppable at set-pieces.

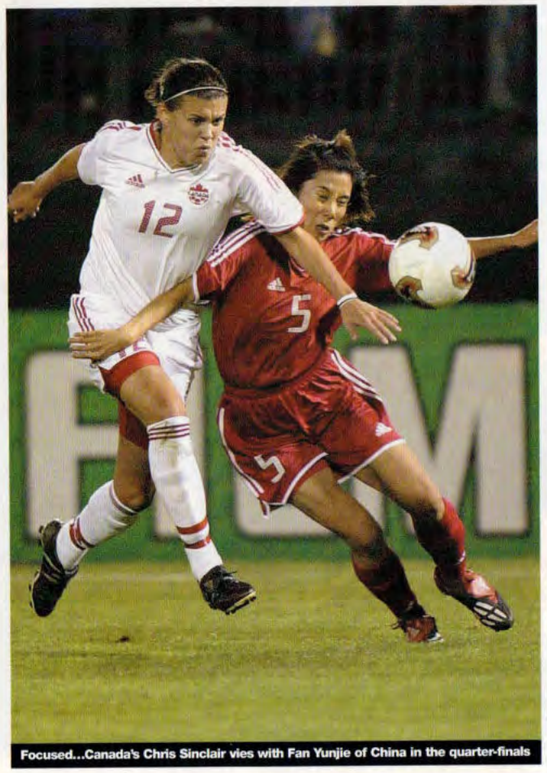
The USA would maintain an unblemished record through a group that included African champions Nigeria and Asian qualifiers North Korea. However, the opener in Washington proved to be their best performance during a tournament that was unkind to several of the sport's elite sides.

While Olympic champions Norway listlessly plodded to a quarter-final exit, and toothless China – who were so close to the title four years before – went out at the same stage to surprise team Canada, the United States and Germany marched inexorably towards a much-anticipated semi-final meeting.

The Germans appeared unstoppable in the early stages, surviving the loss of two first-choice defenders through injury and outscoring their first four opponents by a 20-3 margin. The key was 30-year-old playmaker Maren Meinert, the reigning WUSA Most Valuable Player, who returned to international football after a two-year sabbatical at the request of Germany coach Tina Theune-Meyer.

With Meinert pulling the strings, Birgit Prinz (tournament top scorer with seven goals) up front, the fearless Silke Rottenberg in goal and revelations like midfielder Kerstin Garefrekes and defender Kerstin Stegemann, the Germans were primed to give the United States a taste of their own medicine.

Taste of defeat...Mia Hamm



Focused...Canada's Chris Sinclair vies with Fan Yunjie of China in the quarter-finals

Tactical know-how

Finally equal to the USA athleticism but possessing a tactical and technical know-how the hosts could not hope to match, Germany shocked the stubborn and unimaginative Americans 3-0 in Portland, Oregon. Meinert, Prinz, captain Bettina Wiegmann and others had played and thrived in the WUSA and no longer were intimidated by the now former champions.

"A few of our players who have played here for two or three seasons saw that we could be strong too," said German defender Steffi Jones, who spoke for her fellow WUSA compatriots before being force out of the tournament with an injured knee. "Now when we go up against those big teams we're confident. That was something that we took out of this League and it made us better. That's a big 'thank you'."

The stage was set for an entertaining Final between Germany and Sweden, who had regained their composure and confidence after their USA defeat before negotiating the easier half of the draw boosted by the skilful and incisive attacking exploits of Hanna Ljungberg and Victoria Svensson.

Ljungberg opened the scoring at the Home Depot Center with a well-placed shot in the 41st minute, but the Germans equalised through Meinert 42 seconds into the second half.

Both teams had chances throughout a blistering second half, until the little-used Kuenzer rose above the Swedish defence to score the golden-goal winner eight minutes into extra-time.

USA coach April Heinrichs and her third-placed side came in for heavy criticism from the once-smitten domestic media. They have until next summer's Olympics to match the new standard set by the dynamic Germans. And a month after the World Cup Final, the future of women's professional soccer was still very much in doubt, as discussions with potential sponsors and saviours progressed slowly.

But the game seems on the rise in Germany. Approximately 8,000 delighted fans greeted the new champions on their return to Frankfurt.

RESULTS

Group A

20.09.03	Nigeria-North Korea	0-3
21.09.03	USA-Sweden	3-1
25.09.03	USA-Nigeria	5-0
25.09.03	Sweden-North Korea	1-0
28.09.03	North Korea-USA	0-3
28.09.03	Sweden-Nigeria	3-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
USA	3	3	0	0	11	1	9
SWEDEN	3	2	0	1	5	3	6
North Korea	3	1	0	2	3	4	3
Nigeria	3	0	0	3	0	11	0

Group B

20.09.03	Norway-France	2-0
21.09.03	Brazil-South Korea	3-0
24.09.03	Norway-Brazil	1-4
24.09.03	France-South Korea	1-0
27.09.03	South Korea-Norway	1-7
27.09.03	France-Brazil	1-1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
BRAZIL	3	2	1	0	8	2	7
NORWAY	3	2	0	1	10	5	6
France	3	1	1	1	2	3	4
South Korea	3	0	0	3	1	11	0

Group C

20.09.03	Germany-Canada	4-1
20.09.03	Japan-Argentina	6-0
24.09.03	Germany-Japan	3-0
24.09.03	Canada-Argentina	3-0
27.09.03	Argentina-Germany	1-6
27.09.03	Canada-Japan	3-1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
GERMANY	3	3	0	0	13	2	9
CANADA	3	2	0	1	7	5	6
Japan	3	1	0	2	7	6	3
Argentina	3	0	0	3	1	15	0

Group D

21.09.03	China-Ghana	1-0
21.09.03	Australia-Russia	1-2
25.09.03	China-Australia	1-1
25.09.03	Ghana-Russia	0-3
28.09.03	China-Russia	1-0
28.09.03	Ghana-Australia	2-1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
CHINA	3	2	1	0	3	1	7
RUSSIA	3	2	0	1	5	2	6
Ghana	3	1	0	2	2	5	3
Australia	3	0	1	2	3	5	1

Quarter-finals

01.10.03	USA-Norway	1-0
01.10.03	Brazil-Sweden	1-2
02.10.03	Germany-Russia	7-1
02.10.03	China-Canada	0-1

Semi-finals

05.10.03	USA-Germany	0-3
05.10.03	Sweden-Canada	2-1

Third-place play-off

11.10.03	USA-Canada	3-1

Final

12.10.03	Germany-Sweden	2-1 (aet)

Fielding questions...Southampton and England forward James Beattie puts his media training to the test

Tricks of the trade

Howard Johnson reports on the advice that some leading clubs give to trainees on dealing with the media

"IT'S VERY NOTICEABLE that David Beckham has really improved recently. But frankly, that has to be down to the coaching."

No, this isn't anybody having a dig at Alex Ferguson's training methods in comparison to those of Carlos Queiroz. This is Tottenham Hotspur's welfare education officer Gwyn Walters talking. And he's not even referring to the Real Madrid No 23's performances on the pitch, but rather how he handles the media off it. "I don't know how bright Beckham is. In fact, I know he's not bright academically. But he's clearly worked very hard at dealing with the media. And it shows. He's a very impressive performer now."

Today's top players are the subject of more media speculation than ever before, and the damage that can potentially be inflicted on their careers and on their clubs is immense. The scandals revealed in the British media of late (see panel opposite) have tarnished the name of football to the point where you might believe no one in the sport had ever even considered media training.

This couldn't be further from the truth. With support from the Footballers' Further Education and Vocational Training Society, many top clubs' academies now employ full-time welfare education officers. Their remit is to look after every aspect of a young trainee's needs as he bids to make the professional grade. Media training is a big part of that remit.

"It's primarily about teaching a wide variety of life skills to help our youth academy boys develop and reach their potential – whether it's in football or any other career they may follow should they fail to make the grade," says Trevor Webb, the WEO at First Division West Ham. "Anyone who does this job must have a background in teaching, but the skills we focus on are wide-ranging, from media training through to financial planning, diet, nutrition, the dangers of alcohol and drug abuse, and so on. We even teach players how to dress and conduct themselves properly."

The latter elements may sound ridiculous, but Walters begs to differ. He says: "Things like that can absolutely affect a player's career. When Wayne Rooney won Young Sports Personality of the Year in 2002 and received his award live on television his tie was askew and he was chewing gum. He was absolutely slaughtered by the press. People immediately formed an impression of the lad that may be way wide of the mark, but may well stick.

"Young footballers are no less intelligent as a group than any other. I've got plenty of lads here at Spurs doing A levels. But because they're in the public eye and everything they do is scrutinised, it's vital that they receive media training to avoid making those simple mistakes."

Walters and Webb are both enthusiastic supporters of practical workshops that will allow their youngsters to practise presentation skills and interview techniques before they find themselves doing it for real.

"I remember seeing Glen Johnson (now at Chelsea) being interviewed after playing for England schoolboys once and he was absolutely terrible," says Webb. "So now we take every chance to get my lads in front of a camera. It will help them be prepared for the real deal."

'Beckham's not bright academically. But he's clearly worked very hard at dealing with the media'

Tottenham welfare education officer Gwyn Walters

Interview practice

Spurs have also hooked up with the London College of Printing in a scheme where the college's trainee journalists will come down to under-17 games and interview the players as they come off the pitch to simulate a Premiership scenario. The mutual benefits are obvious.

But while 'umming' and 'aahing' and 'you know-ing' in front of the cameras will do little to endear a footballer to potential sponsors, it's clearly the behaviour that makes the front pages of the tabloids that is most damaging to both the individual and the sport. "You can call it media training in a way," says Webb. "We want to do everything we can to help our boys stay out of the papers when it comes to their personal lives.

"I got Paul Merson and Tony Adams to come down and tell the boys of the terrible realities of the addictions they fought. If you can impress on them the fact that this stuff will come out in the media and will be incredibly damaging to them, then you're doing something very worthwhile. Youngsters need to hear that sort of stuff first hand."

It's obviously a laudable ambition. The worry, of course, is that the people who need the most help right now are not the trainees immersed in the educational culture, but the seasoned professionals, the ones who might not have benefited from the extensive programmes that clubs have now instigated.

"An awful lot of agents – the good ones – are now training their players to deal with the media better," says Webb. "When I first got here I had Joe Cole and Michael Carrick, and although the programme for media training wasn't as advanced as it is now, I'd like to think that some of the experiences they had here have helped them to stay out of that kind of trouble. I know Joe has done plenty of media training himself as his career has developed."

Walters has some sympathy for the big names because of the pressures they are under. He says: "I could do all sorts of things wrong when I was a student and I could get away with it. The top players don't have that luxury. People will sell a story about them for a couple of hundred quid without batting an eyelid. And the trouble is, these guys are the new pop stars. The desire for any kind of news about them is insatiable."

Many of today's players have had to learn through bitter experience. The stars of the future have the chance to use media training to avoid these pitfalls. But are they taking it?

"They were a little slow when we first introduced it," admits Webb. "But we've had players from the first team like Jermain Defoe come down to talk about their experiences, and former internationals like Paul Parker as well. That really helps the youngsters to focus, and it's definitely giving us something to build on here at West Ham. It's definitely an integral part of their life skills education now."

American inspiration

"I was inspired by what I saw over in America to really take media training seriously," says Walters. "The relaxed way in which their athletes dealt with being in the spotlight was very impressive. I'd say the investment that any club makes in this area will be repaid many times over because of the way the players of the future will represent the clubs they play for."

But, according to Walters, clubs are already reaping the benefits of media training. "You have to remember that for every player who gets into the papers for the wrong reasons, there are absolutely loads of players who don't," he says. "We are already having some success."

But someone can always forget to give a sample, of course.

Scandal sheet

The front-page stories troubling English football

SEX

A 17-year-old woman has alleged that she was gang-raped by a number of Premiership footballers at a central London hotel.

In a separate case, a Leeds United player was arrested and questioned over the sexual assault of a young woman.

DRUGS

Manchester United defender Rio Ferdinand has been charged with misconduct by the Football Association after failing to take a random drugs test. He left United's training ground without providing a sample for the testers from UK Sport. Despite United's attempts to contact him, Ferdinand failed to return phone calls, later claiming that he was distracted by an impending house move. Mobile phone bills have revealed that his first call after leaving the training ground was to his private doctor.

There is no suggestion that Ferdinand has ever taken drugs; he took and passed a test three days later.

Former QPR trainee Leon Jeanne has told *The Sun* newspaper that he was introduced to cocaine by an England international and that he knew of five Premiership players who were regular cocaine users.

VIOLENCE

Five Arsenal players have been punished by the FA for their part in a fight on the pitch after the League game against Manchester United at Old Trafford. The punishments were for Lauren (four-game ban, £40,000 fine), Martin Keown (three games, £20,000), Patrick Vieira (one game, £20,000), Ray Parlour (one game, £10,000) and Ashley Cole (£10,000).

ALCOHOL

Manchester City striker Robbie Fowler was pictured in an Essex nightclub smoking and holding two bottles of beer. Three days later, he scored his first goal of the season.

Shouting the odds...Martin Keown confronts Man Utd's Ruud Van Nistelrooy

HOLLAND

Police foil Kezman kidnap plot

POLICE HAVE UNCOVERED a plot to kidnap PSV forward Mateja Kezman. The Serb was the intended victim of a number of his Holland-based compatriots, whose aim was to hold him to ransom. A 59-year-old man was arrested but later released.

Kezman was informed after returning from playing for Serbia & Montenegro against Wales in Cardiff in October. He and his family now have 24-hour protection.

The kidnap scare is the latest in a series of disturbing incidents involving Dutch football figures. Last season, coaches Guus Hiddink and Frank Rijkaard received letters containing bullets, while recently the Ajax team coach, parked near the hotel where the squad were staying on the eve of their match in Groningen, was destroyed by fire. Police suspect arson.

Before the kidnap plot was revealed, Kezman had been making headlines for different reasons. He was sent off against Den Haag for elbowing defender Jeffrey Van As in what was clearly an act of revenge. The Serb had grown increasingly frustrated by provocation from Van As and team-mate Michael Ros and abusive chants from the stands. Afterwards, Kezman said he was merely protecting himself, adding: "In Holland I'm a star, and stars should be protected by referees."

The forward's ensuing three-match suspension ruled him out of PSV's ill-tempered top-of-the-table clash with Ajax in Eindhoven, during which the latter's Rafael Van der Vaart was sent off for kicking an opponent. The game ended 2-2 to keep Ajax two points clear of champions PSV.

Louis Van Gaal has returned to the Amsterdam club, with whom he enjoyed so much success in the 1990s. The former Barcelona coach has succeeded Leo Beenhakker as technical director, and expressed his delight at his homecoming by reading out a self-penned poem at the press conference.

Van Gaal stressed that he would not interfere with the work of coach Ronald Koeman. "I've finished my coaching career three years earlier than planned," he said. "This is something I'm only doing for Ajax. This is my club. I won't interfere with Koeman's job. I've left my training kit in Barcelona."

Ajax, meanwhile, were having to share their Eredivisie lead with surprise package AZ. Ironically, the Alkmaar side are coached by former Ajax boss Co Adriaanse, who is finally giving some success to millionaire chairman Dirk Scheringa. Suddenly, AZ are not only riding high but playing attractive football, with forwards Kenneth Perez, Stijn Huysegems, Ali El Khattabi and playmaker Barry Van Galen the stars.

Feyenoord and Utrecht reached the UEFA Cup second round with victories over Karnten of Austria and Slovakia's MSK Zilina respectively. However, NAC Breda, back in Europe for the first time in 30 years, were thrashed 6-0 on aggregate by Newcastle. NEC Nijmegen, 20 years out of European competition, were beaten 4-2 by Poland's Wisla Krakow and exited in disgrace, having had three men sent off in the second leg.

Klaas-Jan Droppert

Unhappy days...Mateja Kezman has hit trouble on and off the field

AUSTRIA

Constantini to the rescue

Former national team coach Dietmar Constantini has taken over as caretaker at lowly Karnten following the sacking of Hannes Haubitz.

Constantini, the club's sporting director, was handed the job after Karnten exited the UEFA Cup to Feyenoord and dropped to ninth place in the 10-team top division.

"I know the team has potential. Now we need to make them win points, too," said Constantini, who agreed to coach the side until the winter break.

Constantini is Karnten's fourth man at the helm in just 18 months. Haubitz's immediate predecessors were Rudiger Abramczik (six months in charge) and Heinz Hochhauser (four months).

Salzburg, bottom at the end of October, also seem likely to dispense with their coach, Lars Sondergaard.

Harry Miltner

REP OF IRELAND

Longford lift first trophy

Longford Town, who joined the League of Ireland in 1984, won their first senior trophy when beating St Patrick's Athletic 2-0 in the FAI Cup Final.

If the Midlanders' first goal had a touch of luck about it – Sean Francis's cross-shot being deflected over the St Pat's defence into the net – their second, in injury time, was comical. Shane Barrett had the simple task of tapping into an empty net with St Pat's keeper Chris Adamson stranded upfield having gone forward for a corner.

St Pat's lined up without Ugandan international Charles Mbabazi Livingstone, who had been forced to quit football the previous week following a heart scare during a game.

Cup Final referee Alan Kelly was following in the footsteps of his father Pat, who officiated the 1987 and 1996 Finals.

Sean Creedon

San Siro star...Mendoza hit Brugge's winner in Milan

BELGIUM

Waseige takes plunge with Charleroi

FOUR TOP-FLIGHT clubs have already changed coach with the season not yet a third of the way through.

The most noteworthy switch came at Charleroi, who handed former national team coach Robert Waseige a two-year contract to replace Dante Brogno.

But Waseige, who led Belgium to the second round of last year's World Cup finals, must have wondered what he had let himself in for as his new club lost his first two games in charge to slump to the foot of the table.

The story was somewhat different down the road at Mons, who, after relieving Marc Grosjean of his duties and replacing him with Italian Sergio Brio, drew two games and beat Royal Antwerp.

The latter had also just changed coaches. Doy Perazic, successor to the sacked Rene Desaeyere, had previously managed only in the Third and Fourth Divisions. However, the former Dutch League player followed up his initial loss by leading his new charges to a 3-1 win over Lierse.

Lokeren's recent improvement under Paul Put was not enough to keep him in the job, which has now gone to Franky Van der Elst, the former Germinal Beerschot coach and Club Brugge player.

Brugge caused one of the shocks of the season in Europe when beating Milan 1-0 at the San Siro on the third Champions League matchday. The win came courtesy of Andres Mendoza's wonderful first-half goal and outstanding keeping from 40-year-old Dany Verlinden.

Domestically, however, Brugge have slipped off the pace, themselves the victims of a shock when defeated 4-2 at Heusden-Zolder. It was the promoted side's first top-flight victory and came despite playing for most of the second half with 10 men following the dismissal of Vincent Euvrard. Zolder had earlier set an unenviable League record by taking 599 minutes to score their first goal of the season, which somewhat remarkably came against leaders Anderlecht in a 4-2 defeat.

Anderlecht's 1-1 draw with Brugge at the start of October was the only time they dropped points during the first 11 League games. In the Champions League, they followed up a 1-1 draw with Bayern Munich by beating Celtic 1-0 despite playing for more than an hour with 10 men after Glen De Boeck was sent off.

Cup holders La Louviere recovered from their UEFA Cup exit at the hands of Benfica by beating Genk 5-2 in the League. It was only the second time ever they had scored five goals.

Nicholas Harling

LIECHTENSTEIN

Vaduz revive

FC Vaduz, the Principality's leading side, recovered after a mediocre start in the Swiss Challenge League (Second Division), rising into the top half of the table after wins against Concordia Basle and SC Kriens. Balzers held on to top spot in Liga 2 following a 2-0 win over Schmerikon, while Triesenborg continued their good form in Liga 3 with a 6-0 hammering of Weesen.

Graeme Crawford

Simply Gross...Basle's coach was furious as his side slipped at Aarau

SWITZERLAND

Fixture log-jam awaits tardy Sion

SION FINALLY BEGAN their Challenge League (Second Division) campaign having missed the first 12 rounds following a wrangle over their eligibility. They kicked off with a 1-0 win over Bulle in late October but face serious congestion as they must complete the 16-game autumn programme by December.

Sion's start was delayed because of a dispute over their fitness to be granted a licence to play at the second level due to their dire financial state.

Basle's record run of 16 League wins stretching back to May was ended when they could only draw 2-2 at Aarau. Coach Christian Gross was furious at his team's lacklustre performance, saying: "We deserved to lose. Our two goals were gifted by the Aarau keeper. We have to improve greatly if we are to progress in the UEFA Cup against Newcastle."

Basle reached the second round in Europe thanks to a 'silver' goal from Marco Streller, who scored in the fifth minute of extra-time to give his side a 3-2 aggregate win over Malatyaspor of Turkey.

Champions Grasshopper continued their slide towards the relegation zone after five defeats in six games, which spelt the end for coach Marcel Koller. Assistant Carlos Bernegger is the new man in charge.

Ivar von Rulach

SWEDEN

Stoves still too hot to handle

DJURGARDENS, AS EXPECTED, retained their League crown, making sure with a game to play by winning 3-2 at Halmstads. However, the stylish 'Iron Stoves' are likely to be without the coaching partnership of Soren Akerby and Zoran Lukic next season after the former was courted by Denmark's AGF Aarhus.

"It is no secret that Soren and I would like to see how we could cope separately," said Lukic, who looks likely to remain as sole coach of the Stockholm team.

There were two more sour notes for Djurgardens as the season drew to a close. They were prevented from doing the Double when beaten by second level Assyriska in the Cup semi-finals. Then their hooligan element reared its ugly head before the Halmstads game, with five fans arrested.

Halmstads appear to have a bleak future following the resignation of coach Jonas Thern, the former national team captain, and the wantaway noises of Polish top scorer Igor Sypniewski and Sweden midfielder Mikael Nilsson.

Orgryte coach Erik Hamren has also stepped down, joining Denmark's AaB Aalborg and taking players Martin Ulander and Jeffrey Aybunn with him.

Pentti Hietanen

We're tops again...Djurgardens celebrate a second successive Swedish League title

DENMARK

Ebbe aims to turn tide at Frem

Play it like this...Ebbe Skovdahl faces a tough battle to keep Frem in the Superliga

EBBE SKOVDAHL, the most respected Danish coach of his generation, has returned to the Superliga in charge of Frem.

The promoted club have a long tradition at the top level but have struggled to make an impact this season. That meant the sack for manager Ole Mork, and a welcome home for Skovdahl, who has worked with success at Brondby – whom he took to the UEFA Cup semi-finals in the early 1990s – Benfica and Aberdeen.

"We are confident that his experience, attitude, vision and handling of players will secure the club's future in the Superliga," said Frem chairman Filip West.

Skovdahl said all the right things – "I feel it is a club with the right kind of atmosphere" – and his first match in charge brought a 5-1 home victory over Nordsjaelland, striker Mirko Selak hitting a hat-trick. That lifted the club out of the relegation zone and was followed by a battling 0-0 draw at AaB Aalborg.

However, a subsequent 4-0 home defeat by high-flying Esbjerg suggested it is going to be a tough campaign for an old hero.

Brondby still led the way after 14 rounds, two points clear of Esbjerg, but only eight points separated the top six clubs.

Brondby and FC Copenhagen reached the second round of the UEFA Cup with wins over Viktoria Zizkov and Ferencvaros respectively. However, their next opponents – Schalke (Brondby) and Real Mallorca (Copenhagen) look daunting hurdles.

Jim Holden

NORWAY

Bryne bomb in relegation race

Rosenborg's procession to a 12th straight League title left the excitement of the run-in focused on the relegation battle.

As many as nine of the 14 top-flight sides were still in danger with two games to play, but wins for Brann, Lillestrom, Lyn and Viking secured their places for next season. Conversely, Bryne's 4-2 home defeat by Rosenborg made them certain to go down. Aalesund joined them in the drop on the last day – despite beating Bryne 2-0 – when fellow strugglers Tromso scored an amazing injury-time winner against Rosenborg to save their top-flight status.

Bodo/Glimt and Stabaek – who finished second and third – go into the UEFA Cup next season. Stabaek's impressive run-in included a remarkable 6-1 win over Rosenborg in Trondheim. However, the champions had long since tied up the title.

Rosenborg, 10-1 aggregate victors over Ventspils of Latvia in the UEFA Cup, were joined in the second round by Molde and Valerenga, who beat Portugal's Uniao Leiria and Austria's Grazer AK respectively.

Sigurd Odegaard

FINLAND

HJK finish on a roll

HJK Helsinki won their second League title in a row on the back of a 10-game unbeaten run after long-time leaders FC Haka stumbled badly.

It is coach Keith Armstrong's fifth championship in the past six years, having also won it with HJK last term and Haka from 1998 to 2000.

Relegated Kuopio have staged a coaching coup by landing MyPa's outgoing Juha Malinen.

Pentti Hietanen

ICELAND

Out but not down

Iceland's hopes of claiming a Euro 2004 play-off spot were dashed by their 3-0 defeat by group winners Germany in the final round of matches.

The game, in Hamburg, was not nearly as one-sided as the scoreline suggests, and the result left Iceland in third place, their highest finish in a major tournament qualifying campaign.

Veteran former Iceland defender Eyjolfur Sverrisson has been appointed Under-21 coach in place of Olafur Thordarson, whose side failed to win a point in the Euro 2004 qualifiers.

Rab Christie

LITHUANIA

'Clubs fixed games' claim

The FA has launched an investigation into claims of match-fixing relating to two games between champions FBK Kaunas and Zalgiris Vilnius. Media reports alleged that Kaunas 'threw' the second leg of their Cup semi-final against Zalgiris – allowing the latter to reach the Final – in return for 'buying' a win against the same side in the League.

Ekranas and Atlantas are also in the dock following a mass brawl involving players, coaches and even security staff during a recent League game.

Vladimir Kalinkovich

ESTONIA

Title hat-trick for Flora

Flora Tallinn secured their third consecutive Premier League title with two games to play after beating Trans Narva 2-0. The champions were still unbeaten going into their final games.

"The latest title tastes the best, as it is fresh," said Flora's Dutch coach Arno Pijpers, who has been in charge for all three recent championship successes.

Flora forward Tor Henning Hamre set a League record by scoring in 15 consecutive games.

Andres Must

NORTHERN IRELAND

McIlroy makes way

The national team are in search of a new manager after Sammy McIlroy resigned following the 1-0 defeat in Greece in the final Euro 2004 qualifier. The Irish finished bottom of Group 6 with just three points having failed to score in any of their eight games. Indeed, they have created a European record by failing to score in 1,242 minutes of football.

McIlroy won only five of his 29 matches in charge. However, he still retained the support of fans and players, and recently agreed a two-year contract extension. So it was a surprise when he announced he was leaving to take over at English Second Division Stockport.

Champions Glentoran have been docked five points after it was discovered central defender Gary Smyth had not been properly registered with the FA. Last year's Northern Ireland Player of the Year had appeared in their first three League games. Glens were also thrown out of the CIS League Cup, giving semi-final opponents Larne a walkover to the Final.

Frankie Parks became the season's first managerial casualty when sacked by struggling Ards. Shane Reddish, a former player with the club, has taken the reins.

Roy Kitson

WALES

Barry gloom deepens

Defending champions Barry Town are still deep in crisis, short of the £100,000 needed to avoid a closure order.

The club went into administration in August, prompting the departure of the entire first team. Now fielding a side of semi-professionals, Barry were bottom of the League at the end of October, with just one point from seven games.

By contrast, Total Network Solutions – now the only fully professional side in the League – had won all their nine games and were a point clear of Aberystwyth with a game in hand.

Mel Thomas

Hoops whoop...Hartson celebrates his winner against Rangers

SCOTLAND

Berti asset

CELTIC AND RANGERS may be finding the going tough in the Champions League but the national team are gradually battling their way back to European respectability. Berti Vogts' side finished second in Euro 2004 qualifying Group 5 to earn a play-off against Holland – an outcome that seemed unlikely 12 months before when the Scots could only scramble a 2-2 draw away to the Faroe Islands' team of part-timers.

Vogts is slowly winning over the sceptics, having performed near miracles with limited resources. He also appears to have unearthed a real gem in Manchester United teenager Darren Fletcher, who came off the bench on his Hampden Park debut to score the only goal of the game against Lithuania that sealed the runners-up place.

In the perennial two-horse League race, Celtic had the better of the early exchanges, winning the first Old Firm derby with a John Hartson goal and churning out a succession of victories. Inconsistent Rangers dropped points as their new-look side took time to gel.

Alan Fairley

TURKEY

Besiktas parade after the England circus

Confrontation...Alpay taunts Beckham after the England skipper's penalty miss in Istanbul

AFTER ALL THE frenzied build-up to Turkey's final Euro 2004 qualifier in Istanbul – the over-egged media fears that England fans would be massacred; the ban on those fans for fear they may get England expelled from the tournament; the English player mutiny etc – the game was an anti-climactic 0-0 draw.

The result, which left Turkey facing a play-off against Latvia and yet to score against England (31 conceded), was further eclipsed by the Alpay-Beckham saga. This began when the Aston Villa defender and England captain exchanged thoughts after Beckham missed a first-half penalty and continued in the tunnel at half-time, with other players becoming involved.

The furore, which ended when Alpay parted company with Villa at the end of October, almost became an international incident as the media tried to unravel who punched whom, who spat at whom, and whether the Turkish federation was really going to take England to the European Court of Human Rights over the British media hate campaign. UEFA finally had its say by fining the federation £13,200 for failing to properly control their players, while the English FA was relieved of £4,400.

With the circus safely out of town, the Super League was all about Besiktas. Despite criticism of Romanian coach Mircea Lucescu for his perceived caution and perplexing substitutions, the champions have stamped their authority on the competition. An impressive 3-0 win at Gaziantepspor at the end of October put the Black Eagles five points clear of closest rivals Fenerbahce and Galatasaray. Not only that, but two of the goals came from Ilhan Mansiz, now showing the blistering form he had lost after months of injury.

Besiktas have not fared so well in the Champions League, however, failing to build on the shock 2-0 win at Chelsea by losing 2-1 to Sparta Prague and going bottom of Group G.

Suna Erdem

GREECE

Rehhagel eyes the finals

National coach Otto Rehhagel has already turned his attention to next year's European Championship finals having led Greece to the top of qualifying Group 6.

"We have time until Portugal. We do not just want to make an appearance in the finals, but to show something positive," said the German. Greece sealed their place with a 1-0 home win over Northern Ireland.

Vassilis Hadzipanagis, a dazzling midfielder with Iraklis in the 1970s and 80s, won a convincing victory in a poll to name Greece's best player of the past 50 years.

Lou Economopoulos

SLOVENIA

Surprise, surprise

There have been plenty of surprises in domestic football, with outsiders Primorje and Koper joint top with defending champions Maribor in the League, and FC Jesenice becoming the first Third Division side to reach the Cup semi-finals.

Branko Oblak has been named as Slovenia's best player of the past 50 years in a poll of coaches, players, journalists and club officials.

Zdravko Reic

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Blaz brings unity

The national team's narrow failure to qualify for the Euro 2004 finals was compensated by a new-found spirit of unity within the ethnically-divided country. Bosnia-Herzegovina missed out on topping Group 2 – and indeed taking the play-off place – by only drawing 1-1 at home with Denmark, but there was no mistaking the hope shared by the whole nation surrounding the game in Sarajevo.

Much of the credit must go to national coach Blaz Sliskovic. He set out his stall when taking the job after the 2002 World Cup qualifying campaign by saying: "I'm not interested in ethnic differences. The best players will play even if they are 11 Serbs, Croatians or Muslims."

Zdravko Reic

Crisis? What crisis?

Jump to it...Dragan Mladenovic (right) tussles with Wales' Gary Speed

SERBIA & MONTENEGRO

THE NATIONAL TEAM'S 3-2 win away to Wales in the final Euro 2004 qualifier showed that, under the guidance of Ilija Petkovic, they have overcome the crisis endured under previous coach Dejan Savicevic. However, the victory also served to rub salt into wounds. "Only we can do such a thing – draw twice with the Italians, beat Wales home and away, but finish only third because of losing five points to Azerbaijan," said forward Savo Milosevic.

Meanwhile, Savicevic, who stayed on as Montenegrin FA president after quitting the national team job, made headlines recently when losing his temper and hitting a journalist during an interview.

Partizan Belgrade's 1-0 Champions League defeat by Real Madrid came as a relief for the visiting fans, who had feared a thrashing at the Bernabeu. Red Star beat OB Odense 6-5 on aggregate in the UEFA Cup first round after running out 4-3 winners in an exciting second leg. Sartid Smederevo gave a solid display away to Slavia Prague but lost 2-1 on the night and 4-2 overall.

In the League, Red Star went top on the back of six consecutive wins coupled with Partizan's 2-1 defeat at Sartid and their goalless draw away to Hajduk Kula.

Vladimir Novak

MACEDONIA

Dragan back on board

Dragan Kanatlarovski, as expected, has taken charge of the national team for the second time, signing a two-year deal. He will also continue at top division Pobeda Prilep until the end of the year and possibly the end of the season.

He had initially retaken charge of Macedonia as caretaker in August following the dismissal of Nikola Ilievski.

As part of the new arrangement, Kanatlarovski agreed to drop an action against the federation claiming £18,000 to cover the rest of his contract when he was sacked from the national team post in March 2001.

Vardar and Cementarnica went out of the UEFA Cup in the first round to Roma (5-1 on aggregate) and Lens (6-0) respectively.

In the League, Bregalnica are in crisis after 14 players went on strike over unpaid wages and the resignation of coach Kiril Dojcinovsk. The club were docked three points after being unable to put out a full side for a League game.

Michel Stojmanovski

ISRAEL

Hampered by home truths

National coach Avraham Grant has hit out at criticism of his failure to guide Israel into the Euro 2004 play-offs, saying the team have almost no chance of success as long as home matches have to be played at neutral venues abroad in front of empty stands.

New FA chairman Yitzhak Menahem, who replaced Gavri Levi last month, will continue campaigning for an end to the situation, a result of security concerns.

Israel won only one of four 'home' Euro 2004 ties – 2-0 against Cyprus in Palermo, Italy – on their way to finishing third in qualifying Group 1.

Maccabi Haifa were the only Israeli team to reach the UEFA Cup second round after beating Slovenians Publikum 4-3 on aggregate. Hapoel Tel Aviv and Hapoel Ramat-Gan lost to Gaziantepspor of Turkey and Levski Sofia of Bulgaria respectively.

Unfancied Bnei Yehuda have been making the early running in the League, while promoted Arab club Ahi Nazareth were bottom without a point after five games. They had drawn a match, but that point was docked for financial irregularities.

Ori Lewis

MALTA

Heese goes full-time

Horst Heese, initially appointed as caretaker national coach following the departure of Siegfried Held, has been handed the post full-time. The German will be assisted by former international Carmel Busuttil, earmarked to take over from Heese in two years, with the latter staying on as technical director.

Hamrun Spartans have turned to former national coach Guentcho Dobrev to help lift them off the bottom of the table. He replaces Patrick Curmi.

Domenico Aquilina

CROATIA

Biscan's future in doubt

THE NATIONAL TEAM future of Igor Biscan is hanging by a thread after he disappeared from the Croatia camp the evening before the final Euro 2004 qualifier against Bulgaria in Zagreb.

It transpired that the Liverpool youngster spent the night clubbing, with speculation rife he took the decision because he was angry that he would not be in the starting XI the following day.

"As long as I'm in charge, there is no room for Biscan," said federation president Vlatko Markovic, while national coach Otto Baric stated: "It could be that the young lad, not denying his qualities, might be expelled for ever from the team."

The affair took attention away from Croatia's 1-0 victory over group winners Bulgaria, which secured them a play-off tie against Slovenia.

Former national coach Miroslav Blazevic has taken the reins at Varteks Varazdin following his brief, disastrous spell at Slovenian side Mura. But he made a less-than-auspicious start at his new club, failing to win in his first three games.

Dinamo Zagreb, joint League leaders with Hajduk Split, have signed veteran ex-Derby striker Branko Strupar.

Zdravko Reic

In hot water...Igor Biscan

Lovely bubbly for CSKA

RUSSIA

THIRTY BOTTLES OF special 'Red Army' red sparkling wine were drained in the CSKA Moscow dressing-room after a 3-0 victory over Rotor Volgograd brought them their first Premiere League title – and with a game to spare.

Croat Ivica Olic, the Army side's mid-season signing for a record £3 million, played a vital part in the team's success, scoring some crucial goals. He formed the League's most powerful attacking force with Czech midfielder Jiri Jarosik – bought from Sparta Prague for £2.3m – and ex-Dinamo Moscow winger Rolan Gusev, dubbed the 'Russian Beckham'.

Igor Akinfeev, a product of the recently-revived CSKA youth academy, is another key player. At 17 he became the youngest goalkeeper to play in the Premiere League and the youngest to win a title. His form earned him a call-up to the Russia squad for the Euro 2004 play-off against Wales.

Club president Yevgeni Giner has insisted coach Valeri Gazzayev will remain in charge next season, scotching rumours of secret talks with several top foreign coaches including Vicente Del Bosque, Louis Van Gaal and Artur Jorge.

Zenit St Petersburg, led by Czech manager Vlastimil Petrjela, finished second, but promoted Chernomorets Novorossiisk were certain to go straight back down to Division One with a game still to play.

Victor Gusev

Flying...winger Rolan Gusev has starred in CSKA's title-winning attack

CZECH REPUBLIC

Sparta start to shine

SPARTA PRAGUE'S impressive Champions League form has coincided with a revival in their domestic fortunes. Five days after beating Besiktas 2-1 in Europe, the Czech champions moved to within three points of League leaders Banik Ostrava with a 1-0 win over Brno.

At the bottom of the table, Chmel Blsany eased their desperate situation with a first victory, beating Jablonec 3-1 in new coach Michal Bilek's first match in charge.

The game was watched by a crowd of just 51 since Blsany are currently playing 'home' games in Pribram because their own stadium does not meet League standards. Bilek, who replaced the sacked Gunter Bittengel at the beginning of October, described the turnout as "tragi-comic".

Blsany followed up with a 2-1 win over hosts Marila Pribram – technically an 'away' game for the former.

Fellow strugglers Viktoria Zizkov remain winless under new coach Vaclav Hradecky, while Jablonec fired Vlastimil Palicka and brought in Petr Rada.

National coach Karel Bruckner has been handed a contract extension until 2006 in recognition of the team's superb Euro 2004 qualifying campaign.

Sam Beckwith

Heads...Sparta (maroon) take on Besiktas

UKRAINE

Dynamo shade Shakhtar

For the second year running, Kyiv Dynamo have outshone their main Ukrainian rivals Shakhtar Donetsk in European competition. While the latter once again failed to make it to the Champions League group stage then crashed out of the UEFA Cup at the first hurdle, Dynamo gained valuable wins in the premier competition. They opened with a 2-0 victory at home to Lokomotiv Moscow, then, after losing 2-1 at Internazionale, beat Arsenal by the same score back on home soil.

"I'm grateful for the performance and spirit," said Dynamo president Ihor Surkis after the Arsenal game. "We fought for the whole of Ukrainian football."

Shakhtar, still on top in the domestic League after holding Dynamo to a 1-1 draw in Kyiv in early October, were humbled 5-2 on aggregate by Dinamo Bucharest in the UEFA Cup first round. That prompted them to adopt an 'if you can't beat them, buy them' policy – lining up Dinamo's best defender, Flavius Stoican, on a two-year contract.

Dnipro, Ukraine's other UEFA Cup representatives, caused a surprise by beating Hamburg 4-2 on aggregate.

The national team were held to a goalless draw at home by Macedonia in Oleg Blokhin's first game in charge. The former Soviet Union international introduced five new players for the friendly – defenders Olexii Gai (Shakhtar) and Bogdan Shershun (CSKA Moscow), midfielders Evgen Lutsenko (Dinamo Moscow) and Oleh Husev (Kyiv Dynamo) and forward Olexander Kosyrin (Chornomorets).

Oleg Zadernovsky

ARMENIA

Ara aims for record

Banants striker Ara Akopyan hit his seventh hat-trick of the season in the 4-1 win over Lernagorts to keep himself on course for a League record. The goals put Akopyan on 37 for the season, two short of the highest ever tally and with nine games still to play.

Vladimir Kalinkovich

Top that...Andrzej Niedzielan celebrates after scoring against Hungary

Beleaguered Janas gets FA backing

POLAND

NATIONAL COACH Pawel Janas has received the strong backing of FA chairman Michal Listkiewicz despite having failed to take Poland to the Euro 2004 finals.

"Janas should stay. If the board do not accept my decision, I will quit," said Listkiewicz, who oversaw the coach's appointment in January following the resignation of Zbigniew Boniek after a run of poor results.

Poland ended their Euro qualifying campaign with a 2-1 win in Hungary but their hopes of making the play-offs were dashed by Latvia's shock 1-0 win away to group winners Sweden. This meant the Latvians took the play-off berth.

Groclin Dyskobolia forward Andrzej Niedzielan scored both Poland's goals against Hungary, having been called up at the last minute because of injuries to the regular forwards. His success on the international stage is something of a rags-to-riches story since only a year ago he was sold by Zaglebie Lubin to Gornik Zabrze for 30 footballs after being described as a "non-promising forward who has scored only seven goals in the Premier Division since his debut in 1998".

However, Niedzielan scored 15 times in the first part of the 2002-03 season, prompting an international call-up, and earned a move to Groclin during the winter break. He is now valued at £700,000.

Both Niedzielan's goals were set up by Groclin team-mate Grzegorz Rasiak, and the two combined again at club level to put their side through to the UEFA Cup second round. This time, Niedzielan assisted Rasiak to score the only goal of the tie against Hertha Berlin and set up a meeting with Manchester City. Ironically, the opposition keeper was Gabor Kiraly, who had also played for Hungary during the Euro 2004 defeat.

Wisla Krakow also qualified for the second round, Tomasz Frankowski scoring all the goals in their 4-2 aggregate defeat of NEC Nijmegen.

Dariusz Kurowski

BULGARIA

All change in Sofia

Sofia rivals Levski and CSKA both enjoyed early successes after making coaching changes.

Levski's reappointment of Georgi Vasilev was followed by the team rising to third in the League, securing a UEFA Cup second round spot following a 5-0 aggregate win over Hapoel Ramat-Gan, and having two key players – striker Georgi Chilikov and keeper Dimitar Ivankov – sign contract extensions.

Vasilev, who led Levski to two League titles in the 1990s, replaced Georgi Todorov. He resigned after a goalless draw with lowly Cherno More.

Champions CSKA Sofia also won the first two League games under their new coach, Aleksander Stankov, now in his third spell in charge. Predecessor Stoicho Mladenov stood down following UEFA Cup elimination by Torpedo Moscow and indifferent League form.

Georgi Dimitrov's reign at Marek lasted just a month after he lost all three League games in charge. Rumen Stoyanov is his replacement.

Mitko Dzhorov was in charge of struggling Botev for only a week, sacked after a 4-2 defeat at Spartak Varna in his debut game. The former youth team coach, who had replaced Kostadin Kostadinov, gave way to ex-Botev defender Trifon Pachev. Yordan Bozdanski has taken over from Yuri Vasev at struggling Makedonska Slava.

Michael Bowesfield

ROMANIA

New boys take top spot

Unheralded Apulum Alba Iulia stunned Romanian soccer by briefly topping the table after their ninth-round game, a 1-0 win at Bacau. The promoted club are playing in the top flight for the first time in their 80-year history.

"We are up there because we fight hard and don't accept any compromise," said coach Aurel Sunda, whose squad are among the worst paid in the First Division and use the bus to travel to the stadium since they cannot afford cars.

Dinamo and Steaua Bucharest made UEFA Cup progress after beating Shakhtar Donetsk (5-2 on aggregate) and Southampton (2-1) respectively.

National coach Anghel Iordanescu is suing Gigi Becali, Steaua's main shareholder, for libel after being accused of corruption. Becali alleged during a TV interview that "Iordanescu took money for selecting unknown young players for the national team in order to help build up their name and raise their transfer fees".

Radu Timofte

SLOVAKIA

Euro whitewash

Zilina, Puchov and Petrzalka all exited the UEFA Cup, with the first two branded a disgrace by fans and pundits after suffering heavy aggregate defeats.

Zilina went down 4-0 at home to Utrecht in the second leg – making a 6-0 defeat overall – while Puchov were thrashed 8-0 away to Barcelona having surprisingly held them 1-1 at home. Only Petrzalka salvaged any pride, edged out 3-2 on aggregate by Bordeaux.

Defender Stanislav Varga made his first international appearance for two years in Slovakia's 2-0 Euro 2004 win away to Liechtenstein in October.

The woes of Slovan Bratislava have continued, despite the appointment of ex-national coach Jozef Adamec to replace caretaker Libor Fasiang. They were second from bottom after 13 rounds.

Ed Holt

HUNGARY

Debrecen march on

Debrecen, going well in the League, are also Hungary's last representatives in Europe, going through to the UEFA Cup second round after an 6-3 aggregate win over Croatians Varteks Varazdin. Ferencvaros went out 3-2 on penalties to FC Copenhagen after a 2-2 draw.

Latvia's win in Sweden on the last Euro 2004 matchday made Hungary's result against Poland academic for the Magyars. As it turned out they lost 2-1 to end an ultimately disappointing campaign.

Peterjon Cresswell

Quilmes quick to settle

ARGENTINA

Up and running...Quilmes' Sergio Zanabria takes control against Independiente

QUILMES MADE THE best start by a newly-promoted side since the 1991 championship format change when taking 24 points from their first 12 games. Not only that, but they rose to second place in the opening championship, just three points behind leaders Boca Juniors, after the latter lost their first game of the season, 1-0 away to Newell's Old Boys.

River Plate are not in the title hunt for once – lying nine points behind their great rivals Boca after 12 rounds – but they have been improving in recent games. After a six-match winless run, a players' meeting was organised to hammer out where the team's problems lay and what to do about them. Defender Eduardo Tuzzi commented afterwards: "We were all playing 100 per cent individually, but without helping each other as a team; the meeting we had was very useful."

That said, it seems only a matter of time before leading scorer Fernando Cavenaghi moves to a European club.

It has been all change in La Plata, with Gimnasia y Esgrima coach Mario Gomez fired after the team lost 1-0 to city rivals Estudiantes. Following speculation that former national coach Cesar Menotti would succeed Gomez, Timoeo Griguol was appointed to take charge of the club for the third time. Then Estudiantes boss Carlos Bilardo, another ex-Argentina coach, was forced to step down temporarily because of serious tax problems. His replacement is Carlos Pachame, Bilardo's former assistant at national team level.

Judge Mariano Berges' continuing probe into hooliganism is unearthing evidence of what has long been known unofficially but has never before been investigated – that hooligan gangs, the so-called *barra bravas*, have connections with club officials, players, police and politicians.

Several Chacarita Juniors hooligans, for example, have implicated club vice-president Armando Capriotti as the man who organises free bus trips to away matches and gives out up to 1,000 match tickets to the gangs.

Meanwhile, Rafael Di Zeo, co-leader of Boca Juniors' gang, has successfully evaded arrest, with speculation rife that he is receiving tip-offs about tracking operations through his police connections. On one occasion he slipped away from the flat of his girlfriend – a police corporal, no less! – just before a swoop.

Di Zeo has said in the past that he has helped organise trouble at the request of the police. Clubs are forced to hire more police when security concerns are high as a result of increased hooliganism, and the officers earn extra pay for attending football matches.

As for Congress, it still has not passed into law a bill to stiffen jail sentences for hooligans two years after it was presented.

Julio Grondona, president of the FA for the past 24 years, has been unanimously re-elected to serve another four years.

Eric Weil

PERU

Ref banned over video ruling

REFEREE HUGO RIVERA has been suspended by FIFA after annulling a goal during a League match on the strength of video evidence. Such a decision is forbidden by the world body.

The situation arose after Rivera awarded a goal to Sporting Cristal in a closing championship game against Sport Boys. A representative of the latter club then pressed fourth official Ivan Chang to view a TV monitor replaying the 'goal', which showed that the ball had not crossed the line. Chang told Rivera, who annulled the strike. Sport Boys eventually won 4-2, so the controversial decision did not change the result.

Traditional power Universitario sunk even lower in the table after losing 2-1 to city rivals and championship leaders Alianza Lima in what is one of the oldest derbies in South American football. Universitario had gone into the game without coach Ramon Quiroga, who had left blaming a run of poor results on financial troubles. "This is the best team we can afford," he said.

Quiroga, Peru's keeper at the 1978 World Cup, is the sixth coach to leave the debt-ridden club in two years.

The FA is spending £3.75million to refurbish seven stadiums – most of them currently in a poor state – in preparation for next year's Copa America. The 12-team tournament could be staged using fewer stadiums, but the Peruvians are keen to host games in all parts of the country. There are even plans to play the opening match in Cusco, 3,400 metres above sea level, a plan that is likely to bring protests.

It is the first time the Copa will have been staged in Peru for 46 years.

Eric Weil

MEXICO

Guadalajara get helping Hans

Late surge...Pachuca (stripes) have picked up plenty of points in recent games in their bid to make the play-offs

GUADALAJARA PUT THEMSELVES right back in contention for a play-off berth in the opening championship after switching coaches following a dismal run of results. Six defeats in 10 matches prompted the dismissal of Eduardo De la Torre, but his successor, Hans Westerhoff, led the team to two straight wins to give them renewed hope of progress.

Pachuca are another side to make a late bid for a place in the knockout stages, taking 13 points from their six games up to the end of October having won only a point a game for their first seven encounters.

That said, nearly all the 20 sides had a chance of making the quarter-finals with four rounds of the league stage to go. Only San Luis, Atlas and Gallos Blancos were out of contention. Atlas replaced coach Fernando Quirarte with Sergio Bueno, while Abel Alves has made way for Wilson Graneolatti at San Luis.

Carlos Ramirez

CANADA

New man will have work cut out

THE CANADIAN Soccer Association had received 50 applications for the vacant national coach position by the end of October, most from European candidates. But whoever succeeds German Holger Osieck will have his work cut out to mould the side into contenders for a World Cup finals berth, the next big challenge on the horizon.

Canada's less-than-impressive recent results, including a first-round exit from this year's Gold Cup, meant they dropped to 83rd in the latest FIFA rankings. "We've dropped so far down the rankings that we've made our bed and we've got to lie in it," says interim manager Colin Miller, who stepped in after Osieck left in August. His charges certainly showed character in their most recent game – a 3-2 friendly defeat away to Finland on October 11. Canada were 3-0 down at half-time but hit back with strikes from Tomasz Radzinski and Dwayne De Rosario in the last 15 minutes.

The new long-term appointment is due to be made by the end of the year. Meanwhile, Canada fans can look forward to watching their national team on home soil. Remarkably, they have not played a game in the country for three years. The World Cup qualifiers, which start in 2004, will put an end to that.

Philippe Germain

ROUND-UP

● ECUADOR: LDU Quito won the second stage of the championship to go into the play-offs with five bonus points. First-stage winners Barcelona also have five and El Nacional two.

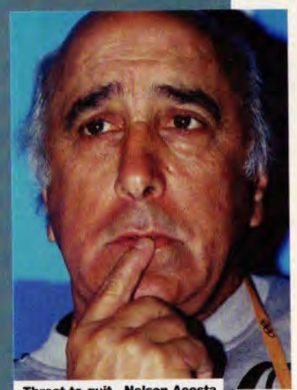
● URUGUAY: Penarol's 10-game unbeaten run in the closing championship was surprisingly ended when losing 2-0 away to lowly provincial side Tacuarembo. The Montevideo team lost again on the following weekend to see their lead cut to four points with five games to play. Their closest challengers are Miramar Misiones, another provincial team, who are proving the revelation of the season.

● CHILE: Universidad de Concepcion are the surprise package of the closing championship, showing the best record of any of the 16 teams with two games of the league stage to play.

● BOLIVIA: The country's political unrest caused the suspension of matches on one weekend and forced some clubs to postpone training sessions. Blooming and The Strongest topped the two groups when the closing championship first stage was finally completed; they go into the play-offs together with Real Potosi, Bolivar, Aurora, Oriente, Iberoamericana and Jorge Wilstermann. However, these were also set to be put back until after Bolivia's mid-November World Cup qualifying matches away to Argentina and Venezuela. The delay was prompted by a threat to resign from national coach Nelson Acosta due to a lack of co-operation from the clubs. They had withdrawn players from national team training sessions.

● PARAGUAY: Libertad beat Olimpia 2-1 on the last day of the closing championship to finish joint top with their rivals. The two clubs were set to play a special title-deciding match.

Eric Weil


Threat to quit...Nelson Acosta

Time up for No 10s

USA

NOBODY SAID IT was going to be easy, and MLS has certainly found the going tough during its eight years of existence as the USA's professional soccer league.

In a sense, the League has left everyone dissatisfied: too many foreigners at the same time as not enough foreigners, which also means too many Americans, or maybe not enough Americans. MLS plays in the summer, and the traditionalists think it should play in the winter. Trying to avoid drawn games – a bete noir for Americans, summed up in a famous phrase: "It's like kissing your sister" – MLS plays 10 minutes of extra-time if the score is level, something else that the traditionalists don't like. And so on.

But the over-riding achievement of MLS is to have survived, very much against the odds. As the 2003 season winds down, the realisation comes that MLS has been around long enough to witness a changing of the guard. A generation of players, the hardy originals who were around in 1996 when things started, is bowing out. A couple of them retired before the season started – Tab Ramos and Carlos Valderrama, both skilful, creative midfielders and arguably the top players in their respective countries, the USA and Colombia.

They will shortly be joined by two more players with similar backgrounds: exciting playmakers, national soccer heroes: El Salvadoran Mauricio Cienfuegos (Los Angeles Galaxy) and Bolivia's Marco Etcheverry (DC United).

Alongside the appropriate sadness at watching stars fade away, there is a deeper concern. For it is not just four much admired and honoured players who are going; it also seems that a style of play is leaving with them. The role played by the quartet was that of the classic South American No 10, the wily midfielders who run the team, who make the killer passes, who score goals, who take wonderful free-kicks, and, above all, are always an exciting attacking presence.

A look around the current MLS teams reveals no likely replacements in that role – with a major, and surprising, exception to be made for New England Revolution. This was the team that ex-Liverpool Scotsman Steve Nicol guided to the MLS Final last season with a colourless, no-frills brand of soccer that virtually eschewed the very idea of midfield play. Yet in July, here was Nicol announcing "this is a good signing for the club and the League" as he introduced Jose Cancela, a tricky, thinking Uruguayan midfielder. Hardly Nicol's sort of player, one would have thought, but the coach got it exactly right. The 27-year-old, who spent five years with Penarol, has transformed Revolution from a non-descript team struggling to repeat last season's unlikely success into genuine challengers for this year's title.

Elsewhere in MLS, the midfield scene is largely one of workers and runners. Things were not supposed to be that way at MetroStars when new coach Bob Bradley brought in Amado Guevara at the start of the season. The 27-year-old had greatly impressed for Honduras during World Cup qualifying games, but he has disappointed as a playmaker in the USA.

Bradley suffered another big disappointment in the poor form of forward Clint Mathis. After scoring some goals early on, he lost his way and began to show an earlier fault of getting himself sent off for stupid acts of indiscipline. The goals dried up, and MetroStars, having at one point looked almost certain winners of the Eastern Conference, struggled to finish third.

A similar collapse befell Columbus Crew, who started well with three wins and two draws in their first six games but finished bottom of the Eastern Conference, with only 10 wins from 30 games.

By the time coach Mike Jeffries was ousted by Dallas Burn mid-season, the team were already beyond redemption. They finished bottom of the Western Conference with a League worst record of 19 losses and only six wins under Jeffries' successor Colin Clarke, the ex-Northern Ireland international.

As for the play-off contenders, Los Angeles Galaxy and San Jose Earthquakes both looked potential title winners during the regular season – the sad thing was that they were to meet in the first round of the knockout stage. Galaxy should have the edge, and could well go all the way to the Final. The Eastern Conference winners, Chicago Fire, seem most likely to take the other berth.

DaMarcus Beasley has proved a true match-winner for the latter, rather than a mere midfielder. He never stops moving – and does everything else as well: dribbling, defending, scoring and – perhaps the key to his wonderfully eccentric play – surprising. But it is up front that Fire look most talented. Ante Razov has managed to quell his tempestuous nature and score some remarkable goals. His renaissance owes a lot to the arrival of 22-year-old Jamaican Damani Ralph, who has hit 11 goals to go alongside Razov's tally of 14.

A satisfactory, if unspectacular, season for MLS, then. A Galaxy-Fire Final seems the most logical, but logic may have little to do with matters, particularly as there has been no outstanding team, no team that has shown any consistency, during the regular season.

Paul Gardner

Transformer...Jose Cancela has turned New England Revolution into genuine title contenders

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First blood to Al Ain

AL AIN of the United Arab Emirates claimed the inaugural Asian Champions League title, defeating Thailand's BEC Tero Sasana 2-1 on aggregate in the Final.

Salem Jawhar and Mohamed Omar gave Al Ain a two-goal advantage in the home leg, and Therdsak Chaiman's goal in Bangkok was not enough to prevent them collecting the £300,000 first prize.

Asian confederation general secretary Peter Velappan hailed the new tournament, saying: "We are verý pleased with the positive elements in terms of quality of games, popularity, attendances and media coverage, which was the best we've had."

Yet it was far from being an unqualified success. The SARS virus outbreak delayed the latter stages, which had been scheduled for May. Also, the fact that a team from one of Asian football's major nations – Japan, South Korea, China, Iran and Saudi Arabia – failed to reach the Final has brought the competition's credibility into question.

The lack of a continent-wide television deal meant fewer fans could see the games, while questionable refereeing tarnished the latter stages. The most glaring example came in the second leg of the Final, when what appeared to be a perfectly good second goal by BEC Tero Sasana's Preratat Phoruandee was disallowed.

Such matters were not going to dampen Al Ain's celebrations, however. "We have reached the pinnacle of Asian football," said delighted coach Bruno Metsu, the former Senegal boss.

Michael Church

Asia's finest...Salem Jawhar Salmeen grasps the trophy

Coelho takes the rap

SOUTH KOREA were among the latest batch of nations to qualify for next year's Asian Cup finals in China, but not without questions arising over the future of national boss Humberto Coelho.

The Portuguese, the long-term replacement for World Cup hero Guus Hiddink, was under pressure after losing qualifiers to both Oman and Vietnam. "We will discuss all matters, including Coelho's possible replacement," said KFA general secretary Cho Chung Yun. "The players tried their best. It is usually the general's responsibility if a battle is lost in a war."

In mitigation, Coelho had been deprived of his growing band of Europe-based players, as well as those playing in Japan's J.League, forcing him to field inexperienced sides against both Oman and Vietnam.

South Korea qualified as runners-up to Oman in Group E, Iraq and Bahrain qualified from Group F, while Saudi Arabia and Indonesia took the honours in Group C. Kuwait came through from Group B, joining hosts China and holders Japan in next July's finals.

Michael Church

JAPAN

Verdy revive under Ossie

Goal glut...Patrick Mboma

OSSIE ARDILES has achieved a remarkable turnaround since taking charge of Tokyo Verdy 1969, leading them from the bottom of the J.League to the top in only four months. They were ahead of Yokohama F Marinos on goal difference at the end of October with four Second Stage games to play.

"When I arrived, the team had just got out of bottom place," says Ardiles, whose team lost only two of his first 16 League games in charge. "I didn't think we'd keep on winning like this. My first priority was to keep the club up."

Cameroon striker Patrick Mboma has hit dramatic form since the former Argentina midfielder took over, taking his goal tally to 13 in 19 games.

At the bottom, new Vegalta Sendai coach Zdenko Verdenik said he needed a miracle to keep his team in Division One after they suffered a record-breaking 19th League game without a win. They duly won their next match, 1-0 at Gamba Osaka.

Mike Plastow & Yumiko Nagae

ASIA/OCEANIA ROUND-UP

- Songnam Ilhwa won the SOUTH KOREAN League title for the third successive season, clinching it with seven games to spare. The club invested over £3.5 million in new players during the close season.
- Inter Shanghai – previously Shanghai Zhongyuan – led the standings in CHINA after 22 rounds, two points clear of Shanghai Shenhua.
- Victory won their fourth successive MALDIVES League title, beating arch-rivals Valencia 2-1 in the Final.
- Former Chinese international Fan Zhiyi suffered a dismal start to his reign as player-coach of HONG KONG side Buler Rangers. They remained anchored at the bottom of the table after a 2-0 defeat by Sun Hei in his first match in charge.
- Zobahan topped the table in IRAN after seven rounds, three points ahead of Esteghlal.
- Champions Perth Glory swept to the top of the AUSTRALIAN National Soccer League with a 2-0 win at Sydney Olympic, the team they beat in last season's Grand Final.
- Hosts Ba dominated FIJI'S Inter Districts Championship, taking the title for the 19th time. They won all their six matches, scoring 16 goals without reply. In the Final, Ba defeated arch-rivals Nadi 1-0 through a 20th-minute goal by Ken Doidoi.
- Oceania champions NEW ZEALAND were beaten 3-0 by Iran, holders of the Asian Cup, in Tehran in the second staging of the AFC/OFC Challenge Cup.

Michael Church, Azam Mahmood & Paul Moon

Winning start for Bwalya

FORMER African Footballer of the Year Kalusha Bwalya made a successful first outing as Zambia coach, steering his charges to a 4-0 win away to Seychelles in their opening 2006 World Cup qualifier.

Bwalya's appointment failed to persuade some of the country's more established overseas-based players to end their long-standing boycott. Nevertheless, the victory provided a much-needed fillip for the Zambians, who have struggled to live up to their reputation in recent years.

Gift Kampamba, based in Russia with Rostov, opened the scoring after eight minutes.

Another Rostov player, Essau Kanyenda, scored twice for Malawi as they surprised Ethiopia 3-1 in Addis Abeba, their first win in 12 games. But it came too late to save Malawi's English coach Alan Gillett, whose contract is not being renewed.

Angola's Ismael Kurtz was another coach looking for a new job following a 3-1 defeat in Chad, for whom Francis Oumar hit a hat-trick in the last 15 minutes.

The games were preliminary round, first leg ties, with the returns scheduled for mid-November. The winners go through to the group phase, which starts next June. The World Cup qualifiers are also serving as qualifiers for the 2006 African Nations Cup.

Mark Gleeson

Enyimba reach last four

Enyimba of Nigeria booked the last berth in the African Champions League semi-finals, with a comfortable 4-2 home win over Ismaili of Egypt.

The result took Enyimba above their opponents in Group A, allowing them to avoid a semi-final clash with favourites and Group B winners Esperance of Tunisia. That task is left to the Egyptians, while Enyimba face a much easier tie against USM Alger.

Mark Gleeson

Going for goal...Gift Kampamba was on target for Zambia in the Seychelles

AFRICA ROUND-UP

CENTRAL AFRICA

- Former ZAIRE international Andre Tshisambu has died in Kananga after a brief illness. He had been coach of his former club Okapi.
- Former Brazil winger Jairzinho is to take over as coach of GABON. In the League, US Bitam took the title on goal difference from defending champions FC 105 Libreville, then did the Double by beating USM 4-3 on penalties after a 1-1 draw.
- Noel Minga is the new coach of CONGO, replacing Swiss Claude Andrey.

EAST AFRICA

- Hafidh Badru has been appointed coach of TANZANIA, replacing Mshindo Msolla.
- UGANDA'S Express have fired Danish coach Jan Fry and replaced him with Leo Adraa, currently also coaching the national side.
- St Michel United have won the SEYCHELLES League for the sixth time in 10 years.

NORTH AFRICA

- Ex-ALGERIA coach Nasser Sandjak quit after just three months with JS Kabylie when they went out in the quarter-finals of the CAF Cup. The club had won the trophy for the past three seasons.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

- Mogoditshane Fighters won the BOTSWANA Cup for the third time in five years, beating Township Rollers 1-0 in the Final.
- Bakili Bullets, owned by MALAWI'S President, clinched the League title by beating Civo United 4-0.
- Seven coaches departed in a week in SOUTH AFRICA'S Premier League. Most notable were the resignation of Roy Barreto at champions Orlando Pirates and the firing of Dutchman Clemens Westerhof by Hellenic.

Mark Gleeson

Champions all...Malawi's Bakili Bullets

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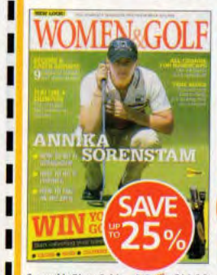

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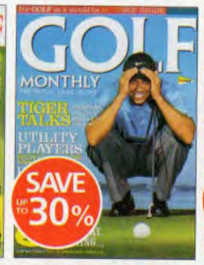

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TALENT SCOUT

TOMORROW'S STARS TODAY

Timo HILDEBRAND

Stuttgart's record-breaking keeper eyeing a first cap

ANGELOS HARISTEAS' GOAL for Werder Bremen in their 3-1 home defeat by Stuttgart in mid-October was quite a novelty. Apart from being the first Bundesliga goal promising young Stuttgart keeper Timo Hildebrand had let in this season, it also brought to an end his record-breaking run of 884 minutes without conceding a League goal. The remarkable sequence stretched right back to the penultimate game of last term.

Obviously a solid Stuttgart defence – featuring the Portuguese-Brazilian centre-back duo of Fernando Meira and Marcelo Bordon and Croat midfield holder Zvonimir Soldo – was instrumental in Hildebrand surpassing the previous best unbeaten mark, set last year by Bayern Munich's Oliver Kahn. But by no stretch of the imagination was the 24-year-old under-employed as clean sheet followed clean sheet.

A great penalty save in Stuttgart's 1-0 win at Borussia Monchengladbach was just one of many occasions when Hildebrand proved his team's saviour. Often the victor in one-on-one situations and a specialist in reflex stops, he has at times this season been in a state of grace. Most deservedly, he was voted Bundesliga Player of the Month for September.

Dramatic interventions aside, Hildebrand boasts many other strong points. He is authoritative, agile, leaps well for crosses despite a relative lack of inches and is comfortable with the ball at his feet.

"Of all our first-team squad, Timo is the one who has made the most progress lately," says Stuttgart coach Felix Magath. "He has become a more complete keeper. He is more commanding and no longer allows his concentration to slip."

In many ways Hildebrand is cast from the same mould as former German national team keeper Toni Schumacher. Like the former Koln number one, he is intensely competitive and totally dedicated to his craft. Since joining Stuttgart as a 16-year-old in 1995, extra training sessions have always been the order of the day. To add muscle to his naturally slender frame, he spends countless hours in the weights room.

"Timo realised early on that to succeed it is not enough to train for the alotted time, play, clean his boots and then go home," says Stuttgart goalkeeping coach Jochen Rucker. "He's never satisfied and works at his game incessantly."

Yet to win his first full cap for Germany, Hildebrand faces much competition for a place in the international sun from the established order of Kahn, Jens Lehmann of Arsenal and Schalke's Frank Rost. There is also plenty of up-and-coming competition such as Tim Wiese (Kaiserslautern) and Roman Weidenfeller (Dortmund). However, Hildebrand is confident he will be at Euro 2004.

"With Stuttgart in the Champions League, I have a better chance of selection for Germany," argues Hildebrand. "It's a great opportunity to get noticed, to make a name for yourself. My long-term aim is to be Oliver Kahn's successor.

"My other goal is to win the Bundesliga, and I'm very hopeful it will happen with Stuttgart soon. We showed what we could do by finishing runners-up last season, and there's much more to come from us."

Nick Bidwell

No way through...Hildebrand keeps out an effort by Hansa Rostock's Martin Max

FACT FILE

Club Stuttgart
Country Germany
Born April 5, 1979, in Worms
Previous club FV Hofheim/Ried

Aruna DINDANE

Race hots up for Anderlecht's striking sensation

FACT FILE

Club Anderlecht (Blg)
Country Ivory Coast
Born November 26, 1980
Previous club ASEC Abidjan
Honours Belgian League 2001

TIMING IS EVERYTHING for quick-heeled Aruna Dindane. Not only the timing with which he bursts through defences at home and abroad for Anderlecht but also the timing of his departure from Brussels for a more lucrative destination.

Dindane will be 23 on November 26 and has been in Europe only three years. But already he is being hailed as some sort of new Eusebio after his achievements with Anderlecht and, previously, ASEC Abidjan, the top club in the Ivory Coast.

At 17 Dindane was thrown into the big time for an African Supercup showdown against Esperance of Tunisia, one of the continent's long-time powers. He scored ASEC's winner to fulfil all the predictions being made by his mentor Jean-Marc Guillou, the idiosyncratic French coach.

Guillou, a former France midfielder, had set up a revolutionary academy in the Ivory Coast where developing football talent was matched by concerns to introduce street kids to a proper diet and the rudiments of education.

Dindane, like most of Guillou's discoveries, started playing in bare feet. The Frenchman had no objection, saying: "Playing in bare feet actually teaches kids a better technique and knowledge of how to care for the ball. It's playing in boots or training shoes that is more difficult for them."

Guillou wanted to introduce the best of his players to Europe and found Belgium a more open market than France. Thus Dindane left ASEC for Anderlecht three years ago for a mere £1million.

His first season brought a League title and five goals in six starts. In his second, he was a regular first-choice, scoring 10 goals in 27 starts. He would probably have scored more had he not been suspended for making a rude gesture at a referee. The same applied last season after another skirmish with another match official. Now Dindane claims he has learned his lesson – after a total of eight weeks of suspension – and believes he is ready for even greater things.

He says: "I have made progress every season. Last year I won the award for best African footballer in Belgium and this year I am told I could be Belgian Footballer of the Year. If that happens then there is nothing more I can achieve here and I'll want a new challenge.

"It's important because the Champions League has taught me I need to play regularly at a higher level than Belgian football to improve my game. Ideally, it would be great to follow my best friend, Kolo Toure, to Arsenal, though the competition for places in attack there might be tough. I mean, my great hero Dennis Bergkamp is there as well.

"But I can at least say I've had an offer from Manchester United, so I think I have a right to set my sights high."

United came calling last summer, according to Dindane's agent, Serge Trimpont. He says: "Anderlecht offered Aruna a rise and a longer contract but United wanted him to turn it down and sit out the last year of his present deal. But, after everything Anderlecht had done for Aruna, we didn't think that was fair to them. You don't have to believe everything you hear about greedy players and agents."

Dindane agreed to stay with Anderlecht until 2006 but on condition that he could be transferred if he received a significantly improved offer from abroad. Those offers, Trimpont knows, are in the pipeline. The question is only when Dindane should go – during the January transfer window or at the season's end? At least by the start of the new year Nenad Jestrovic should be fit to resume up front after missing the first half of term. Michel Verschueren, Anderlecht's veteran general manager, says: "If we get a good offer for Aruna, maybe around £8million, then we will keep our word at the end of the season."

That may depend on Anderlecht qualifying for the last 16 of the Champions League. But Dindane also has a particularly personal reason for making the most of whatever opportunities are around the corner. He says: "I have a guardian angel, my brother Yakob, who died from malaria last January. He was so proud of me that I want to honour his memory the best way I can – out on the pitch."

Keir Radnedge

Flying high...Dindane terrorises Celtic's defence in the Champions League

Marcelo SOSA

Uruguay's Sancho Panza providing the defensive muscle in midfield

URUGUAY COACH Juan Ramon Carrasco is a footballing Don Quixote, consumed with an idealistic quest to get his side playing beautiful, attacking football.

But every Don Quixote needs a Sancho Panza to supply some balance. In Carrasco's case the role of the faithful squire who injects a dose of realism is played by defensive midfielder Marcelo Sosa.

"Glory is all very well," says Sosa, "but it doesn't mean that anyone is going to pay your bills later in life. I dedicated myself to football to make money, and I'll play for the club that pays me the most."

Much to his regret, a move to Kyiv Dynamo fell through earlier this year. Sosa, then, is still at Danubio, where he made his way through the youth ranks. He has become a symbol of the team, and on matchdays many of the supporters wear his No 5 shirt. Sosa jokes: "It's because I stole as many shirts as I could and handed them out to the fans."

In his adolescence Sosa did indeed have a wild streak – which for reasons too obscene to explain here is the origin of his nickname Pato ('Duck'). Born into a footballing family in a working-class district of Montevideo, he grew up just two blocks away from Obdulio Varela, the legendary captain of the 1950 World Cup-winning side.

"He would often stop and talk to us," says Sosa. "He would explain that football is a passion that requires total dedication."

Some see in Sosa a reincarnation of Uruguay's old-time holding midfielders, leaders who knew how to use as well as win the ball. Certainly, his ability to be constructive is high among the factors that have quickly made him one of the most important members of Carrasco's national side.

"I always like to have a midfielder with Sosa's characteristics," says the coach. "I don't expect magic. What I ask from him is a bit of rebellious spirit, a good heart, plenty of ball-winning and sound passing."

And that is what he provided when Uruguay got their World Cup qualification campaign under way with an exhilarating 5-0 victory against Bolivia. But Sosa was injured and could not recover in time for the next game, against Paraguay in Asuncion. He was badly missed. Uruguay began brightly, but then were overwhelmed as Paraguay powered to a 4-1 win.

Carrasco's bold philosophy began to be questioned. Now it faces the supreme test. Can three strikers and a platoon of attacking midfielders really work away to Brazil? Sosa will have to be at his dynamic best. But he is confident. "World champions are not robots," he says. "They are human beings, just like us. We can be champions, too. It's difficult, but not impossible."

Even Uruguay's Sancho Panza has a touch of the dreamer.

Tim Vickery

FACT FILE

- Club Danubio
- Country Uruguay
- Born June 2, 1978, in Montevideo
- International debut March 2003, v Japan
- International caps 10 (1 goal)

Dmitri BULYKIN

Dinamo striker celebrating hat-trick success for Russia

LOKOMOTIV MOSCOW coach Yuri Syomin must have been more than a little embarrassed on seeing Dmitri Bulykin mark his second appearance for Russia with a brilliant hat-trick in a 4-1 Euro 2004 qualifying victory over Switzerland. Back in 2000, repeated clashes between Syomin and Bulykin led to the latter being shunted out of the club. Syomin pulled no punches when saying: "It does not matter how talented a player is. Those who don't have the right attitude are not needed."

For the first time in his young life, Bulykin had to deal with a major setback. Until his fall-out with Syomin, he had risen effortlessly through the ranks of the Lokomotiv youth academy, impressed on making his first-team debut in the 1998 season, and played for Russia at youth level. As a son of professional volleyball players, Bulykin was showing natural athleticism, as well as pace, remarkable skill for a tall man and power in the air. Quite rightly, he was tipped for the top, but there were many lessons yet to be learnt. After talk of moving abroad melted away, he settled instead for Dinamo Moscow. Bulykin's first two seasons there yielded only eight and five League goals respectively. But he set up his share of goals, learnt how to scrap and became more adept at holding the ball up and linking play.

His rehabilitation was completed this season. A plentiful supply of goals and a much more incisive all-round game earned him a call-up from new national coach Georgi Yartsev. He duly made his full debut in September in a 1-1 draw with the Republic of Ireland in Dublin. Four days later, Bulykin wreaked havoc among the Swiss as he grabbed his memorable hat-trick.

"Not long ago I couldn't have imagined myself playing for Russia, let alone scoring a hat-trick," says Bulykin, who has recently been linked with a move to Sampdoria. "I've had a great start but now I must keep it going."

Nick Bidwell

FACT FILE

- Club Dinamo Moscow
- Country Russia
- Born November 20, 1979, in Moscow
- Previous club Lokomotiv Moscow
- International debut September 2003, v Republic of Ireland
- International caps 2 (3 goals)

Vincent KOMPANY

Schoolboy prodigy scaling the heights with Anderlecht

ANDERLECHT'S Vincent Kompany is just 17 and still at school, but has already rubbed shoulders with the big names of the Champions League. At no point has he looked out of his depth.

Only drafted into the first team in August because of injury to skipper Glen De Boeck, the teenage central defender has not put a foot wrong. His physical power, sound positioning and speed has proved more than a match for opponents such as Bayern Munich's Dutchman, Roy Makaay, and Club Brugge's Peruvian marksman, Andres Mendoza.

The son of a Belgian mother and Congolese father, Kompany and superlatives have become twin brothers of late. Anderlecht general manager Michel Verschueren rates him alongside Paul Van Himst and Enzo Scifo as the best player to emerge from the club's youth ranks; his coach, Hugo Broos, believes he has more potential than current Belgian central defensive pillar Daniel Van Buyten of Marseille; others liken him to Patrick Vieira and Marcel Desailly.

National coach Aime Anthuenis is equally grateful Kompany chose football over another athletic pursuit – the long jump. Despite having played only a handful of senior club games, Anthuenis included him in his squad for the October Euro 2004 tie against Estonia. Kompany did not play but his time will come soon, especially after the *Diables Rouges'* failure to qualify for Portugal.

"Talent, not age, is what counts," said Anthuenis. "Kompany has shown many qualities and has looked the part in Europe. He can play stopper, libero or as a defensive midfielder."

Even more impressive is his extraordinary level-headedness despite being thrust into the media spotlight. Influenced by his father Pierre, who teaches engineering, he insists on staying at school – where he studies economics and modern languages – and is always at pains not to play the young buck.

Kompany says: "I'm only at the start of my career and still have everything to prove. It's my nature to be modest. I don't take myself too seriously."

Nick Bidwell

FACT FILE

- Club Anderlecht
- Country Belgium
- Born April 10, 1986, in Brussels

Danijel LJUBOJA

Serb striker starring for Strasbourg in France

ANYBODY WHO SAW Strasbourg's recent 4-1 victory over Marseille would have been impressed by the performance of Danijel Ljuboja. The 25-year-old striker scored from a free-kick and provided two assists. Although he also missed a penalty, his technique, speed and dribbling skills were to the fore throughout.

By late October he had scored five goals (plus three assists) in Strasbourg's rise to sixth place in the League. Last summer Ljuboja was the target of several top clubs and was close to joining Marseille before opting to extend his Strasbourg contract until 2006. But he has left the door open for France's most glamorous club, saying: "Marseille have fantastic supporters and I also like the idea of living by the sea. If I continue playing well, I believe they will call again."

Ljuboja, a Serb, was born and brought up in Croatia. Shortly before civil war broke out, his family moved to Serbia, where Ljuboja, then 12, joined the youth ranks of Second Division Borac Cacak. Within months, however, he had gone on trial to Sochaux and passed with flying colours.

It was not all plain sailing in France. Ljuboja suffered relegation with Sochaux at the end of his first season in the top flight, 1998-99. The following year, though, Ljuboja scored 17 Division Two goals, earning a £2.5million move to Strasbourg. His first season in Alsace was rather disappointing. He scored only three goals and again experienced relegation, though winning the French Cup was some consolation. However, he hit 15 goals in 2001-02 to ensure Strasbourg made a quick return to Division One.

Ljuboja made his international breakthrough this year, shining in the Euro 2004 qualifiers at home to Italy and away to Wales, against whom he scored his first goal. On that sort of form, he could become a key figure in Serbia & Montenegro's 2006 World Cup qualifying campaign.

Vladimir Novak

FACT FILE

- **Club** Strasbourg (Fra)
- **Country** Serbia & Montenegro
- **Born** September 4, 1978, in Vinkovci, Croatia
- **Previous clubs** Borac Cacak, Sochaux (Fra)
- **Honours** French Cup 2001 (Strasbourg)
- **International debut** February 2003, v Azerbaijan
- **International caps** 4 (1 goal)

Giorgios SEITARIDIS

Europe's finest race to land Pana's stylish full-back

TIME SEEMS TO be running out on the Panathinaikos career of outstanding young right-back Giorgios Seitaridis. While club vice-president Pavlos Vardinoyiannis has repeatedly insisted that the 22-year-old is not for sale, the economic realities suggest otherwise. With Seitaridis out of contract next June and little likelihood of an extension being negotiated, Pana would obviously rather make money on him during the January transfer window than allow him to walk away for free at the end of the season.

There should be no shortage of takers. Liverpool, Barcelona, Valencia, Borussia Dortmund, Schalke and Werder Bremen are reported to be interested. So too are Monaco, who had a bid of £2.3million plus Argentinian playmaker Marcelo Gallardo rebuffed last summer.

Those monitoring Seitaridis' form will no doubt have been impressed by the confident way he has established himself in the Greek national team over the past 18 months. A crisp tackler, skilful and a most purposeful overlapper, he made the switch from Under-21s to seniors without batting an eyelid. Indeed, he assumed a starring role as Greece surprisingly outstripped Spain in the race for direct qualification for Euro 2004.

Greece's German coach Otto Rehhagel has always appreciated tactically-disciplined, versatile players, and Seitaridis fits the bill perfectly. For someone so young, his awareness and positional play are remarkable. What's more, as well as showing mastery at right-back, he also has experience at left-back, in central defence and in midfield.

The Piraeus-born defender joined Panathinaikos from Giannina as a 19-year-old midway through the 2000-01 season and it wasn't long before he made a name for himself at his new club. A spectacular goal in a 1-1 Champions League draw with Manchester United in March 2001 marked him out as one for the future; he has subsequently lived up to the billing.

Nick Bidwell

FACT FILE

- **Club** Panathinaikos
- **Country** Greece
- **Born** June 4, 1981, in Piraeus
- **Previous club** Giannina
- **International debut** February 2002, v Sweden
- **International caps** 13 (0 goals)

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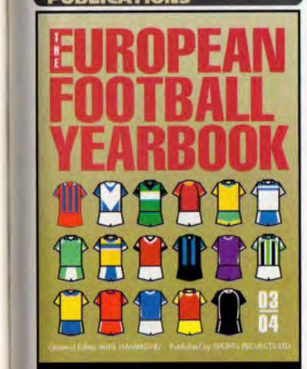

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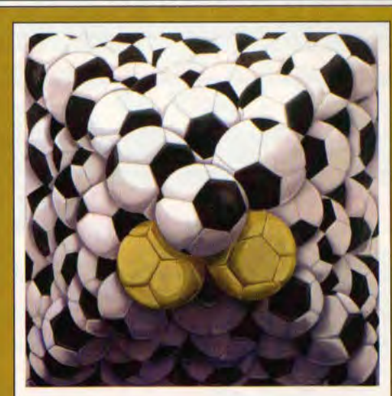

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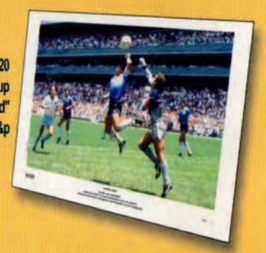
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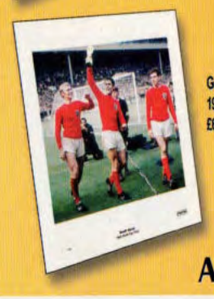
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11-goal thriller!

Monaco hit eight past Deportivo as Juventus and Madrid reach last 16

REAL MADRID AND JUVENTUS had second-round slots in the Champions League sewn up after only four matchdays, but it was Monaco who stole the group-stage glory with their sensational 8-3 thrashing of Deportivo La Coruna. Dado Prso struck four times in 24 minutes either side of half-time.

Group A remains wide open with pre-event favourites Bayern Munich stumbling along in their now usually disappointing Champions League way.

They opened up with a narrow win when two goals in the last 20 minutes from new boy Roy Makaay brought a turnaround 2-1 defeat of Celtic.

Bayern followed up with a 1-1 draw away to Anderlecht despite the first-half expulsion of Claudio Pizarro for two yellow cards inside a minute. Roque Santa Cruz levelled Ivica Mornar's opening goal for Anderlecht, who had lost their opening match 1-0 to Lyon and a Juninho Pernambucano penalty. Celtic beat Lyon 2-0 in their second game and would have won a fine match more decisively but for the excellence of keeper Gregory Coupet.

The double-headers then turned the group around. Celtic lost 1-0 away to Anderlecht but repaired the damage with a 3-1 win at home, while Lyon took four points off Bayern. The teams drew 1-1 in France, then Lyon won 2-1 in Munich to go top of the table. Makaay scored again, in both ties, however his strike in the home game was sandwiched between goals from Juninho and Giovane Elber – the man whom Makaay had replaced at Bayern in the summer. The Brazilian thus won £7,000 from Bayern president Franz Beckenbauer, who had bet Elber would not score in either of the games between the clubs.

Group B was equally confused. Inter produced the pick of the early performances by defeating Arsenal 3-0 at Highbury, the Gunners' worst home beating in Europe in 21 years. Two goals in three minutes midway through the first half gave Inter a two-goal lead courtesy of Julio Cruz – standing in for the injured Christian Vieri – and Andy Van der Meyde. Keeper Francesco Toldo's save from a Thierry Henry penalty was decisive in keeping Inter in charge, and Obafemi Martins exploded away for No 3 before half-time.

Inter then looked a different team as they stuttered to a 2-1 home win over Kyiv Dynamo, lost 3-0 at Lokomotiv Moscow, and then managed only a 1-1 draw with the Russians back in Milan. The latter match was played under Alberto Zaccheroni after the sacking of Hector Cuper.

Arsenal off the mark

Arsenal claimed their first point from a goalless draw away to Lokomotiv, then lost 2-1 at Dynamo, before beating the Ukrainians 1-0 at Highbury courtesy of a late Ashley Cole header. It was Arsenal's first Champions League home win for 14 months.

Monaco grabbed all the glory in **Group C**, initially thanks to Fernando Morientes. He revelled in his place back in the Champions League spotlight on loan from Real Madrid and crowned his European debut for Monaco by heading their first goal in a 2-1 win over PSV Eindhoven.

The Monegasques then thrashed AEK 4-0 with two goals from Morientes and soon put the subsequent 1-0 defeat at Deportivo La Coruna behind them. Prso celebrated his 29th birthday in style in the return by

Birthday treat...Monaco's Dado Prso celebrated turning 29 by scoring four goals against Deportivo

scoring four times, including a first-half hat-trick, in Monaco's record 8-3 win over the Spanish side. Prso became only the third player to score four goals in a Champions League tie, following Marco Van Basten for Milan against IFK Gothenburg in 1992 and Lazio's Simone Inzaghi against Marseille in 2000.

Jerome Rothen and Ludovic Giuly had put Monaco 2-0 up in the first 11 minutes; Jaroslav Plasil and Edouard Cisse scored Monaco's other goals. Diego Tristan (two) and Lionel Scaloni replied for Depor, who substituted goalkeeper Jose Molina having gone in 5-2 down at half-time.

Monaco coach Didier Deschamps said: "It's difficult to grasp. It's an extraordinary moment to beat a side like Deportivo 8-3 in the Champions League. Unthinkable."

Prso added: "This feels great. The coach said before the game he'd give me a birthday present. It couldn't be better. I've scored hat-tricks in training matches but I've never scored four in a game before."

Morientes, out with a thigh injury, enjoyed the view from the stand in the company of Raul, his old friend and captain from Real Madrid.

Record aggregate

The previous highest Champions League aggregate score was nine goals set when Paris Saint-Germain beat Rosenborg 7-2 in October 2000. The last 8-3 scoreline in Europe's top club competition was in 1964 when Lokomotiv Sofia beat Malmo.

Monaco's success came with the club under heavy pressure in France for the perceived advantages they gain from the principality's tax-break system. But as new president Pierre Svara said: "If it weren't for our record in Europe, France wouldn't get so many clubs into the Champions League."

In the night's other Group C tie, AEK Athens lost 2-0 at PSV Eindhoven to make it impossible for them to reach the second round. Goals from Wilfred Bouma and Arjen Robben revived the Dutch club's qualifying hopes.

Juventus strolled comfortably into the second round from **Group D** after winning their first three games and drawing away to Real Sociedad in their next match. The Spanish side had lost 4-2 in Turin, prompting coach Raynald Denoueix to say: "Don't blame the players, blame me. I picked the wrong team and the wrong tactics."

Olympiakos had to wait until their fourth match to pick up their first points, winning 3-0 at home to Galatasaray. The hosts had Predrag Djordjevic sent off at the end after a disgraceful piece of cowardly play-acting by the Gala goalkeeper, Farid Mondragon, for whom a year's suspension would not be too harsh a punishment.

Group E opened with a British double as Manchester United demolished a poor Panathinaikos 5-0 and Rangers defeated Stuttgart 2-1. The Scottish champions thus became the first team to beat the Germans this season and the first to put a goal past keeper Timo Hildebrand.

Stuttgart then beat United 2-1 on two second-half goals in two minutes from Imre Szabics and Kevin Kuranyi. Coach Felix Magath described it as "one of the best victories of my career".

Rangers therefore went top of the group despite being held 1-1 at Panathinaikos. But that lead did not last long after they were dismissed home and away by United. Sir Alex Ferguson first went back to his home city to celebrate a 1-0 win on a rare goal from Phil Neville. Then, at Old Trafford, United strolled through 3-0. Ruud Van Nistelrooy ended a bleak run with his first two goals from open play in more than six games.

The class gap between the teams should silence, for a while at any rate, demands from the Old Firm to be admitted to the Premiership.

In **Group F** Real Madrid pressed ahead efficiently in their quest for a record-extending 10th European crown. They hit back from a goal down in both their first two matches – first in beating Marseille 4-2, with two goals from Ronaldo, then in overcoming UEFA Cup holders FC Porto 3-1 in Portugal. A 1-0 home win over Partizan Belgrade and a 0-0 draw in the return secured Madrid's passport to the second round. They had Iker Casillas' sharp reflexes to thank for their point in the match in Belgrade.

The group's individual exploit was claimed by Ivory Coast striker Didier Drogba. He followed up his lone goal against Madrid by striking a hat-trick in Marseille's 3-0 defeat of Partizan.

Ranieri conquers Rome

Chelsea got off to a slow start in **Group G** before making their heavy investment tell. The double-header with Lazio brought out the best in Claudio Ranieri's men, who won 2-1 at home and then thrashed Lazio 4-0 at the Stadio Olimpico. It was a triumphant homecoming for Chelsea's Rome-born manager. Lazio's humiliation was exacerbated by the embarrassment of Sinisa Mihajlovic's typically bad-tempered expulsion.

European champions Milan made a positive start in **Group H**, beating Ajax 1-0 at home. Pippo Inzaghi followed up his Euro 2004 hat-trick against Wales by pouncing for the only goal on 67 minutes after keeper Bogdan Lobont only parried a shot from Andrii Shevchenko. It was Inzaghi's sixth goal in four games.

Carlo Ancelotti's men stayed top despite then being held goalless in Spain by Celta Vigo, whose players stormed out of the team hotel the night before the game over a bonus dispute with their directors.

Ajax went top after Milan surprisingly lost 1-0 at home to Club Brugge, but the positions were reversed after the Dutch side lost 3-2 at Celta and the Italians took revenge in Belgium. Their 1-0 win came courtesy of an 86th-minute goal from man-of-the-moment Kaka. The bad news for Milan, with the decisive visit to Amsterdam coming up, was to lose skipper Paolo Maldini with a thigh injury.

He expects to be fit for the World Club Cup clash with Boca Juniors but not in time for the test at the Arena.

Keir Radnedge

Heading through...Juve's draw at Real Sociedad put them into the second round

INTERNATIONALS

Wednesday, October 8

Oct 8 - Maseru - friendly
Lesotho 0
South Africa 3 (Moshoeu 24, Fredericks 67, Raselemane 76)
HT: 0-1
South Africa: Josephs - Evans (Tau 58), Molapo, Mkhonza, Kannemeyer, Pule, T Mokoena, Moshoeu, Thwala (Fredericks 46), Mayo (Mendu 87), Raselemane.

Friday, October 10

Oct 10 - Cairo - friendly
Egypt 1 (Hossam 58)
Senegal 0
HT: 0-0
Egypt: N El-Sayed - A Hassan, Al-Tabei, El-Quabbani, Abdelhadi, T El-Sayed, Abdelhafiz (Belal), Emam (Hommos), Abdelhamid, T Said, Hossam.

Saturday, October 11

Oct 11 - Washington DC - friendly
Bolivia 1 (J M Pena 89)
Honduras 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Kennedy (USA)
Bolivia: J C Fernandez - Gatty Ribeiro, J M Pena, O Sanchez, Ricaldi, Raldes, Herrera, Justiniano, Vaca (Mojica 72), C Suarez (L Gutierrez 55), Roger Suarez.
Honduras: Medina - Sabillon (Nery Medina 55), M Palacios, Ninrol Medina, Javier Martinez (R Morales 75), Marin, Mena (Guifarro 50), Jose Pineda (Hernandez 70), Gonzalez, Nunez, Ferreira (Delinson 50).

Oct 11 - Tampere - friendly
Finland 3 (Forssell 14, Kolkka 16, Tainio 32)
Canada 2 (Radzinski 75, De Rosario 85)
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 5,350
Finland: Jaaskelainen - Saarinen, Hyypia (Kuivasto 56), Pasanen (Kottila 78), Heikkinen, Kolkka (Kopteff 46), Vayrynen, Tainio (Riihilahti 62), Nurmela, Eremenko (Sjolund 71), Forssell.
Canada: Onstad (Hirschfeld 46) - Hastings, Watson, McKenna, Stalteri, Jazic (De Rosario 46), Bircham, Imhof, Bent, Radzinski, Peschisolido (Hume 70).

Oct 11 - Lisbon - friendly
Portugal 5 (Figo 6, Simao 48, Rui Costa 55, Pauleta 57, Miguel 64)
Albania 3 (Aliaj 13, 59, Tare 43)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 5,000. **Ref:** Garibian (Fra)
Portugal: Ricardo (Quim 67) - Paulo Ferreira (Miguel 61), Jorge Andrade (Ricardo Carvalho 46), Fernando Couto, Rui Jorge (Nuno Valente 61), Costinha (Beto 73), Tiago (Hugo Viana 46), Figo (Boa Morte 67), Rui Costa (Frechaut 65), Cristiano Ronaldo (Simao 46), Pauleta.
Albania: Strakosha (Billa 64) - Beqiri, Hasi, Cipi, Aliaj, K Duro (Muka 83), Skela, Cana, Murati (Haxhi 67), Tare (Dragusha 86), Rraklli (Bushi 73).

Oct 11 - Bucharest - friendly
Romania 1 (Mutu 17)
Japan 1 (Yanagisawa 58)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 10,000 **Ref:** Carmona Mendez (Spa)
Romania: Lobont - Stoican, Iencsi, Chivu, Rat, Dica (Soava 65), Radoi (Codrea 76), D Munteanu (Zicu 82), Pancu (Cristea 82), Ganea (Bratu 65), Mutu.
Japan: Kawaguchi - Yamada, Tsuboi, Nakazawa, Alex, H Nakata, Inamoto, Ono, Nakamura, Takahara (Okubo 79), Yanagisawa.

Oct 11 - Potchefstroom - friendly
South Africa 2 (Nomvete 75, Mayo 87)
Costa Rica 1 (A Mokoena og 79)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 17,000. **Ref:** Bwanya (Zim)
South Africa: Arendse - Coyle (Tau 85), Mabizela, A Mokoena, Kannemeyer, Pule, T Mokoena (Dladla 81), Moshoeu, J Zwane (Fredericks 44), Nomvete, Mayo.
Costa Rica: De Lemos - Chinchilla, A Castro, Diaz, W Parks, R Fonseca (A Solis 59), Saborio (Diach 68), Wright, Centeno, Lopez, Bryce (Bennett 85).

Oct 11 - Tunis - friendly
Tunisia 0
Morocco 0
Ref: Layec (Fra)
Tunisia: Boumnijel - Trabelsi, Ayari, Saidi, Badra, Ghodhbane, Chedli, Melki (Jaziri 46), Selliti (Braham 65), Benachour, Mhadhebi (Seghayer 46).
Morocco: Fouhami - Ouaddou, El-Karkouri, Naybet, Regragui, Yacooubi (Kharja 71), Romani, Mokhtari (Boughanem 83), Y Hadji, Safri, Chamakh.

Oct 11 - Kyiv - friendly
Ukraine 0
Macedonia 0
Att: 13,000. **Ref:** Orlic (Mol)
Ukraine: Shovkovskyi - Hai, Shershun, Fedorov (Yeserskyi 46), Radchenko, Tymoshchuk, Lutsenko (Nazarenko 49), Rotan (Kosyrin 61), Husev (Rebrov 46), Shevchenko, Vorobei (Mizin 67).
Macedonia: Milosevski (Nikoloski 46) - Stavrevski, Sedloski (Kumbev 46), Mitreski, Dimitrovski (Kapenkovski 59), Stojanoski (Gjuzelov 46), Trajanov (Popov 46), Jancevski (Nuhiji 81), Sakiri, Sumulikoski, Hristov (Toleski 66).

Oct 11 - Dubai - friendly
United Arab Emirates 2 (Khalil 23, Mubarak 49)
Uzbekistan 2 (Krabinko 40, Jeparov 86)
HT: 1-1

Sunday, October 12

Oct 12 - Leicester, England - friendly
Brazil 1 (Roberto Carlos 14)
Jamaica 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 32,000. **Ref:** Styles (Eng)
Brazil: Dida - Cafu, Lucio (Edmilson 68), Roque Junior, Roberto Carlos, Gilberto Silva, Emerson Ferreira (Juninho Pernambucano 68), Ze Roberto, Kaka (Juninho Paulista 68), Rivaldo (Adriano 78), Ronaldo.
Jamaica: Ricketts - Ziadie, C Davis (Stewart 64), Sinclair, Gardner, Whitmore, Langley (Taylor 78), J Lawrence (Crawford 72), Marshall (Neil 89), Fuller (A Williams 69), Burton (Ralph 39).

Oct 12 - Tehran - AFC/OFC Challenge Cup
Iran 3 (Karimi 8, 20, Kaabi 65)
New Zealand 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 40,000. **Ref:** Kousa (Syr)
Iran: Mirzapour - Kaabi, Golmohammadi, Rezaei, Nosrati, Mahdavikia (Bezik 88), Nekoonam, Vahedinikbakht (Navidkia 65), Kavianpour, Daei, Karimi (Madanchi 83).
New Zealand: Paston - Oughton (Wilson 46), Davis, Bunce, Lochhead, Vicelich (Puna 60), Lines, Hickey (Bouckenooghe 46), Bertos, Elliott, Nelsen.

Wednesday, October 15

Oct 15 - Chicago, USA - friendly
Mexico 0
Uruguay 2 (Perrone 26, 63)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 41,587. **Ref:** Kennedy (USA)
Mexico: O Sanchez - Mendez (D Martinez 46), Suarez, H Sanchez, R Morales (Osorno 46), Galindo (Lozano 61), I Rodriguez, Juan P Rodriguez (Rubirosa 74), Valdez, Bautista (Arce 61), Bravo.
Uruguay: Barbat - Lago, Bizera, Romero (Paz 83), Hernandez (Melo 80), Martinez, Sosa, Peralta (Estoyanoff 56), Grosnille (Munoz 68), Perrone (Vigneri 85), Sanchez (C Rodriguez 76).

Thursday, October 16

Oct 16 - Bangkok - friendly
Thailand 2 (Preratat, Sarayuth)
India 0
HT: 0-0

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14 .....Europe (including hosts Germany)
5 .....Africa
4.5 .....Asia
4.5 .....South America
3.5 .....North & Central America
0.5 .....Oceania

AFRICA

Preliminary round, 1st legs

Oct 10 - Bissau
Guinea-Bissau 1 (Dionisio pen 47)
Mali 2 (Traore 8, S Coulibaly 72)
HT: 0-1

Oct 11 - Gaborone
Botswana 4 (Molwantwa 6, Gabolwelwe 44, Selolwane 48, 62)
Lesotho 1 (Ramafole 75)
HT: 2-0

Oct 11 - Bata
Equatorial Guinea 1 (Barila pen 25)
Togo 0
HT: 1-0

Oct 11 - Antananarivo
Madagascar 1 (Edmond 30)
Benin 1 (Corea 75)
HT: 1-0

Oct 11 - Niamey
Niger 0
Algeria 1 (Boutabout 63)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** O Coulibaly (Mli)
Algeria: Mezair - Rahou, Haddou, Aribi (Ziani), Zafour, Mansouri, Mamouni (Kraouche), Achiou, Hadjadj, Boutabout, Akrour (Ghazi).

Oct 11 - Sao Tome
Sao Tome e Principe 0
Libya 1 (Ciraje 87)
HT: 0-0

Oct 11 - Victoria
Seychelles 0
Zambia 4 (Kampamba 8, Fichite 44, Milanzi 52, Mumanba 57)
HT: 0-2

Oct 11 - Dar-es-Salaam
Tanzania 0
Kenya 0

Oct 11 - Kampala
Uganda 3 (Bajope 52, H Mubiru 67, Obua 89)
Mauritius 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 7,251
Uganda: Mugisha - Obwiny, Tabula, Tenywa, Sekajja, Kasule, Kabeta, Bajope, Watson (Ssali), H Mubiru, Obua.
Mauritius: Doro - Speville, Mourgine, L'Ebfie, Edourad, Marmitte (Naboth), Bayaram, Punchoo, Louis, Pierre (Ricardo), Appou (Godon).

Oct 12 - Bujumbura
Burundi 0
Gabon 0

Oct 12 - N'Djamena
Chad 3 (Oumar 65, 75, 89)
Angola 1 (Bruno Mauro 63)
HT: 0-0

Oct 12 - Brazzaville
Congo 1 (Mvoubi pen 89)
Sierra Leone 0
HT: 0-0

Oct 12 - Addis Abeba
Ethiopia 1 (Teshome 81)
Malawi 3 (Kanyenda 39, 55, Mgangira 89)
HT: 0-1

Oct 12 - Bakau
Gambia 2 (Njie 62, Sonko 70)
Liberia 0
HT: 0-0

Oct 12 - Conakry
Guinea 1 (Bangoura 47)
Mozambique 0
HT: 0-0

Oct 12 - Kigali
Rwanda 3 (Manamana 42, Karekezi 50, Lomami 58)
Namibia 0
HT: 1-0

Oct 12 - Khartoum
Sudan 3 (Tumbul 71, Al-Rasheed 75, Mujahid pen 88)
Eritrea 0
HT: 0-0

Oct 12 - Somhlolo
Swaziland 1 (Siza Dlamini 63)
Cape Verde Islands 1 (Calo 59)
HT: 0-0

Oct 12 - Harare
Zimbabwe 3 (A Ndlovu 22, Tembo 47, P Ndlovu 51)
Mauritania 0
HT: 1-0

10.10.03 .....Guinea-Bissau-Mali.....1-2
14.11.03 .....Mali-Guinea-Bissau
11.10.03 .....Botswana-Lesotho 4-1
16.11.03 .....Lesotho-Botswana
11.10.03 .....Equatorial Guinea-Togo.....1-0
16.11.03 .....Togo-Equatorial Guinea
11.10.03 .....Madagascar-Benin 1-1
16.11.03 .....Benin-Madagascar
11.10.03 .....Niger-Algeria 0-1
14.11.03 .....Algeria-Niger
11.10.03 .....Sao Tome e Principe-Libya 0-1
16.11.03 .....Libya-Sao Tome e Principe
11.10.03 .....Seychelles-Zambia.....0-4
15.11.03 .....Zambia-Seychelles
11.10.03 .....Tanzania-Kenya 0-0
15.11.03 .....Kenya-Tanzania
11.10.03 .....Uganda-Mauritius 3-0
16.11.03 .....Mauritius-Uganda
12.10.03 .....Burundi-Gabon 0-0
15.11.03 .....Gabon-Burundi
12.10.03 .....Chad-Angola.....3-1
16.11.03 .....Angola-Chad
12.10.03 .....Congo-Sierra Leone 1-0
15.11.03 .....Sierra Leone-Congo
12.10.03 .....Ethiopia-Malawi 1-3
15.11.03 .....Malawi-Ethiopia
12.10.03 .....Gambia-Liberia.....2-0
16.11.03 .....Liberia-Gambia
12.10.03 .....Guinea-Mozambique 1-0
16.11.03 .....Mozambique-Guinea
12.10.03 .....Rwanda-Namibia 3-0
15.11.03 .....Namibia-Rwanda
12.10.03 .....Sudan-Eritrea 3-0
16.11.03 .....Eritrea-Sudan
12.10.03 .....Swaziland-Cape Verde Islands.....1-1
16.11.03 .....Cape Verde Islands-Swaziland
12.10.03 .....Zimbabwe-Mauritania.....3-0
14.11.03 .....Mauritania-Zimbabwe
16.11.03 .....Somalia-Ghana*
19.11.03 .....Ghana-Somalia
**To be played in Ghana*
Winners progress to qualifying groups

Burkina Faso v Central African Republic – Central African Republic withdrew; Burkina Faso walkover.

Byes: Cameroon, DR Congo, Egypt, Ivory Coast, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tunisia.

The 30 qualifiers will be drawn into five groups of six, the winners of which go through to the finals

ASIA

Pre-qualifying round draw

Bangladesh v Tajikistan
Guam v Nepal
Laos v Sri Lanka
Mongolia v Maldives
Pakistan v Kyrgyzstan
Taiwan v Macao
Turkmenistan v Afghanistan
Ties to be played on a home and away basis by early December 2003; winners qualify for the main Asian qualifying tournament

Automatic entrants to main qualifying tournament: Bahrain, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Malaysia, North Korea, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Korea, Syria, Thailand, Uzbekistan, United Arab Emirates, Vietnam, Yemen

SOUTH AMERICA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Brazil	2	2	0	0	3	1	6
Argentina	2	1	1	0	5	2	4
Chile	2	1	1	0	4	3	4
Uruguay	2	1	0	1	6	4	3
Peru	2	1	0	1	5	3	3
Ecuador	2	1	0	1	2	1	3
Paraguay	2	1	0	1	5	5	3
Bolivia	2	1	0	1	4	5	3
Colombia	2	0	0	2	1	6	0
Venezuela	2	0	0	2	0	5	0

Top four in section qualify automatically for the finals; fifth-placed side enter a qualifying play-off

06.09.03 .....Argentina-Chile 2-2
06.09.03 .....Ecuador-Venezuela 2-0
06.09.03 .....Peru-Paraguay 4-1
07.09.03 .....Colombia-Brazil 1-2
07.09.03 .....Uruguay-Bolivia 5-0
09.09.03 .....Chile-Peru 2-1
09.09.03 .....Venezuela-Argentina 0-3
10.09.03 .....Bolivia-Colombia 4-0
10.09.03 .....Brazil-Ecuador 1-0
10.09.03 .....Paraguay-Uruguay 4-1
15.11.03 .....Argentina-Bolivia
15.11.03 .....Colombia-Venezuela
15.11.03 .....Paraguay-Ecuador
15.11.03 .....Uruguay-Chile
16.11.03 .....Peru-Brazil
18.11.03 .....Chile-Paraguay
18.11.03 .....Venezuela-Bolivia
19.11.03 .....Brazil-Uruguay
19.11.03 .....Colombia-Argentina
19.11.03 .....Ecuador-Peru
30/31.03.04 .....Argentina-Ecuador
30/31.03.04 .....Bolivia-Chile
30/31.03.04 .....Paraguay-Brazil
30/31.03.04 .....Peru-Colombia
30/31.03.04 .....Uruguay-Venezuela
01/02.06.04 .....Bolivia-Paraguay
01/02.06.04 .....Brazil-Argentina
01/02.06.04 .....Ecuador-Colombia
01/02.06.04 .....Uruguay-Peru
01/02.06.04 .....Venezuela-Chile
04/05.06.04 .....Argentina-Paraguay
04/05.06.04 .....Chile-Brazil
04/05.06.04 .....Colombia-Uruguay
04/05.06.04 .....Ecuador-Bolivia
04/05.06.04 .....Peru-Venezuela
04/05.09.04 .....Brazil-Bolivia
04/05.09.04 .....Chile-Colombia
04/05.09.04 .....Paraguay-Venezuela
04/05.09.04 .....Peru-Argentina
04/05.09.04 .....Uruguay-Ecuador
09/10.10.04 .....Argentina-Uruguay
09/10.10.04 .....Bolivia-Peru
09/10.10.04 .....Colombia-Paraguay
09/10.10.04 .....Ecuador-Chile
09/10.10.04 .....Venezuela-Brazil
12/13.10.04 .....Bolivia-Uruguay
12/13.10.04 .....Brazil-Colombia
12/13.10.04 .....Chile-Argentina
12/13.10.04 .....Paraguay-Peru
12/13.10.04 .....Venezuela-Ecuador
16/17.11.04 .....Argentina-Venezuela
16/17.11.04 .....Colombia-Bolivia
16/17.11.04 .....Ecuador-Brazil
16/17.11.04 .....Peru-Chile
16/17.11.04 .....Uruguay-Paraguay
26/27.03.05 .....Bolivia-Argentina
26/27.03.05 .....Brazil-Peru
26/27.03.05 .....Chile-Uruguay
26/27.03.05 .....Ecuador-Paraguay
26/27.03.05 .....Venezuela-Colombia
29/30.03.05 .....Argentina-Colombia
29/30.03.05 .....Bolivia-Venezuela
29/30.03.05 .....Paraguay-Chile
29/30.03.05 .....Peru-Ecuador
29/30.03.05 .....Uruguay-Brazil
04/05.06.05 .....Brazil-Paraguay
04/05.06.05 .....Chile-Bolivia
04/05.06.05 .....Colombia-Peru
04/05.06.05 .....Ecuador-Argentina
04/05.06.05 .....Venezuela-Uruguay
07/08.06.05 .....Argentina-Brazil
07/08.06.05 .....Chile-Venezuela
07/08.06.05 .....Colombia-Ecuador
07/08.06.05 .....Paraguay-Bolivia
07/08.06.05 .....Peru-Uruguay
03/04.09.05 .....Bolivia-Ecuador
03/04.09.05 .....Brazil-Chile
03/04.09.05 .....Paraguay-Argentina
03/04.09.05 .....Uruguay-Colombia
03/04.09.05 .....Venezuela-Peru
08/09.10.05 .....Argentina-Peru
08/09.10.05 .....Bolivia-Brazil
08/09.10.05 .....Colombia-Chile
08/09.10.05 .....Ecuador-Uruguay
08/09.10.05 .....Venezuela-Paraguay
11/12.10.05 .....Brazil-Venezuela
11/12.10.05 .....Chile-Ecuador
11/12.10.05 .....Paraguay-Colombia
11/12.10.05 .....Peru-Bolivia
11/12.10.05 .....Uruguay-Argentina

ASIAN CUP 2004 QUALIFIERS

Group A

Nov 6 - Tashkent
Thailand 0
Tajikistan 1 (Fusailov 79)
HT: 0-0

Nov 6 - Tashkent
Hong Kong 1 (Law Chun-bong 45)
Uzbekistan 4 (Akopyants 1, Shishelov 17, 65, Soliyev 28)
HT: 1-3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Uzbekistan	1	1	0	0	4	1	3
Tajikistan	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Thailand	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Hong Kong	1	0	0	1	1	4	0

06.11.03 .....Thailand-Tajikistan 0-1
06.11.03 .....Hong Kong-Uzbekistan 1-4
08.11.03 .....Hong Kong-Tajikistan
08.11.03 .....Uzbekistan-Thailand
10.11.03 .....Hong Kong-Thailand
10.11.03 .....Tajikistan-Uzbekistan
17.11.03 .....Hong Kong-Thailand
17.11.03 .....Uzbekistan-Tajikistan
19.11.03 .....Tajikistan-Thailand
19.11.03 .....Hong Kong-Uzbekistan
21.11.03 .....Hong Kong-Tajikistan
21.11.03 .....Thailand-Uzbekistan

Group B

Oct 19 - Singapore
Singapore 2 (Juraimi 18, Shah 90)
Palestine 0
HT: 1-0

Oct 22 - Singapore
Palestine 0
Singapore 0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Kuwait	6	5	1	0	17	5	16
Qatar	4	1	2	1	6	6	5
Singapore	4	1	1	2	3	7	4
Palestine	6	0	2	4	3	11	2

04.09.03 .....Singapore-Kuwait 1-3
14.09.03 .....Kuwait-Qatar 2-1
20.09.03 .....Qatar-Kuwait 2-2
24.09.03 .....Palestine-Qatar 1-1
27.09.03 .....Kuwait-Singapore 4-0
27.09.03 .....Qatar-Palestine 2-1
05.10.03 .....Kuwait-Palestine 2-1
08.10.03 .....Palestine-Kuwait 0-4
19.10.03 .....Singapore-Palestine 2-0
22.10.03 .....Palestine-Singapore 0-0
19.11.03 .....Qatar-Singapore
29.11.03 .....Singapore-Qatar

Group C

Oct 13 - Jeddah
Yemen 1 (Y Ahmed 12)
Saudi Arabia 3 (Muntashari 18, Al-Wakad 20, Al-Shihoob pen 82)
HT: 1-2

Oct 13 - Jeddah
Bhutan 0
Indonesia 2 (Edwarar 19, Arif 33)
HT: 0-2

Oct 15 - Jeddah
Indonesia 2 (Edwarar pen 12, Donald 38)
Yemen 2 (Salmi pen 31, Oumqi 59)
HT: 2-1

Oct 15 - Jeddah
Bhutan 0
Saudi Arabia 4 (Jumaan 3, 24, 80, Temim pen 44)
HT: 0-3

Oct 17 - Jeddah
Indonesia 0
Saudi Arabia 6
HT: 0-2

Oct 17 - Jeddah
Yemen 4 (Jajjam 3, 20, Oumqi 33, Salmi 81)
Bhutan 0
HT: 3-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Saudi Arabia	6	6	0	0	31	1	18
Indonesia	6	3	1	2	9	13	10
Yemen	6	2	1	3	15	15	7
Bhutan	6	0	0	6	0	26	0

06.10.03 .....Saudi Arabia-Yemen 7-0
06.10.03 .....Indonesia-Bhutan 2-0
08.10.03 .....Yemen-Indonesia 0-3
08.10.03 .....Saudi Arabia-Bhutan 6-0
10.10.03 .....Saudi Arabia-Indonesia 5-0
10.10.03 .....Bhutan-Yemen 0-8
13.10.03 .....Yemen-Saudi Arabia 1-3
13.10.03 .....Bhutan-Indonesia 0-2
15.10.03 .....Indonesia-Yemen 2-2
15.10.03 .....Bhutan-Saudi Arabia 0-4
17.10.03 .....Indonesia-Saudi Arabia 0-6
17.10.03 .....Yemen-Bhutan 4-0

Group D

Oct 17 - Amman
Jordan 1 (Akel pen 85)
Lebanon 0
HT: 0-0

Oct 27 - Pyongyang
North Korea 1 (Myong)
Iran 3 (Karimi 2, Navidkia)
HT: 0-0

Nov 3 - Beirut
Lebanon 1 (Hamiyeh 58)
North Korea 1 (Kim Yong-chol 60)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 25,000

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Iran	3	2	0	1	9	5	6
Jordan	3	2	0	1	5	6	6
Lebanon	3	1	1	1	2	2	4
North Korea	3	0	1	2	2	5	1

04.09.03 .....North Korea-Lebanon 0-1
05.09.03 .....Iran-Jordan 4-1
26.09.03 .....Jordan-Iran 3-2
17.10.03 .....Jordan-Lebanon 1-0
27.10.03 .....North Korea-Iran 1-3
03.11.03 .....Lebanon-North Korea 1-1
12.11.03 .....Iran-North Korea
12.11.03 .....Lebanon-Jordan
18.11.03 .....Jordan-North Korea
19.11.03 .....Lebanon-Iran
28.11.03 .....Iran-Lebanon
28.11.03 .....North Korea-Jordan

Group E

Oct 19 - Muscat
Oman 6 (Basheer 17, 62, 83, Y Mubarak 20, Thuwaini 44, Mohammed 78)
Nepal 0
HT: 3-0

Oct 19 - Muscat
South Korea 0
Vietnam 1 (Pham Van Quyen 76)
HT: 0-0

Oct 21 - Muscat
Vietnam 2
Nepal 0

Oct 21 - Muscat
Oman 3 (Al-Dhabat, Saleh, Basheer)
South Korea 1 (Chung Kyung)
HT: 0-0
Sent off: Woo Sung-yong (South Korea) 89min

Oct 24 - Muscat
South Korea 7
Nepal 0

Oct 24 - Muscat
Oman 2
Vietnam 0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Oman	6	5	0	1	26	2	15
South Korea	6	4	0	2	30	4	12
Vietnam	6	3	0	3	8	13	9
Nepal	6	0	0	6	0	45	0

25.09.03 .....Nepal-Oman 0-9
25.09.03 .....South Korea-Vietnam 5-0
27.09.03 .....Vietnam-Nepal 5-0
27.09.03 .....South Korea-Oman 1-0
29.09.03 .....Oman-Vietnam 6-0
29.09.03 .....South Korea-Nepal 16-0
19.10.03 .....Oman-Nepal 6-0
19.10.03 .....South Korea-Vietnam 0-1
21.10.03 .....Vietnam-Nepal 2-0
21.10.03 .....Oman-South Korea 3-1
24.10.03 .....South Korea-Nepal 7-0
24.10.03 .....Oman-Vietnam 2-0

Group F

Oct 12 - Kuala Lumpur
Iraq 3 (Jassim 38, Ahmed 50, Fiadh 85)
Myanmar 0
HT: 1-0

Oct 12 - Kuala Lumpur
Malaysia 2 (Muhammed 80, Yosri 90)
Bahrain 2 (Ebrahim 5, Husain 45)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 15,000

Oct 20 - Manama
Malaysia 1 (Hairuddin 53)
Iraq 5 (Qusai 20, Younis 35, 45, 62, Fawzi 71)
HT: 0-3

Oct 20 - Manama
Bahrain 4 (Al-Marzooqi 22, Ahmed 27, Jalal 44, Farhan pen 45)
Myanmar 0
HT: 4-0

Oct 22 - Manama
Myanmar 1 (Soe Lin 44)
Iraq 3 (Abbas Obeid 37, Abbas Zayer 66, Jassim pen 88)
HT: 1-1

Oct 22 - Manama
Bahrain 3 (H Ali 30, 45, Yousof pen 39)
Malaysia 1 (Indraputra 32)
HT: 3-1

Oct 24 - Isa Town
Malaysia 1 (Hairuddin 86)
Myanmar 2 (Soe Myat 24, Ayung Kyaw Tun 42)
HT: 0-2

Oct 24 - Manama
Bahrain 1 (Hubeil 12)
Iraq 0
HT: 1-0
Sent off: Haidar (Iraq) 45min

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Iraq	6	4	1	1	16	4	13
Bahrain	6	4	1	1	14	9	13
Malaysia	6	1	2	3	9	12	5
Myanmar	6	1	0	5	4	18	3

08.10.03 .....Bahrain-Iraq 1-5
08.10.03 .....Malaysia-Myanmar 4-0
10.10.03 .....Myanmar-Bahrain 1-3
10.10.03 .....Malaysia-Iraq 0-0
12.10.03 .....Iraq-Myanmar 3-0
12.10.03 .....Malaysia-Bahrain 2-2
20.10.03 .....Malaysia-Iraq 1-5
20.10.03 .....Bahrain-Myanmar 4-0
22.10.03 .....Myanmar-Iraq 1-3
22.10.03 .....Bahrain-Malaysia 3-1
24.10.03 .....Malaysia-Myanmar 1-2
24.10.03 .....Bahrain-Iraq 1-0

Group G

Oct 15 - Damascus
Syria 5 (Mendou 34, 82, Sayed 54, 84, Al-Khatib 73)
Sri Lanka 0
HT: 1-0

Oct 18 - Damascus
Syria 8
Sri Lanka 0
HT: 2-0

Oct 19 - Ashgabat
Turkmenistan 1 (Bayramov)
United Arab Emirates 0
HT: 1-0

Oct 30 - Sharjah
United Arab Emirates 1 (Matar 60)
Turkmenistan 1 (Bayramov 40)
HT: 0-1
Sent off: Minganov (Turkmenistan) 90min

Nov 7 - Damascus
Syria 1 (Al-Khatib 50)
United Arab Emirates 3 (Yaslam 74, Srour 80, A R Jumaa 89)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** M Moradi (Irn)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Syria	3	2	0	1	14	3	6
UAE	3	1	1	1	4	3	4
Turkmenistan	2	1	1	0	2	1	4
Sri Lanka	2	0	0	2	0	13	0

15.10.03 .....Syria-Sri Lanka 5-0
18.10.03 .....Syria-Sri Lanka 8-0
19.10.03 .....Turkmenistan-UAE 1-0
30.10.03 .....UAE-Turkmenistan 1-1
07.11.03 .....Syria-UAE 1-3
09.11.03 .....Turkmenistan-Sri Lanka
12.11.03 .....Turkmenistan-Sri Lanka
14.11.03 .....UAE-Syria
18.11.03 .....UAE-Sri Lanka
21.11.03 .....Syria-Turkmenistan
22.11.03 .....UAE-Sri Lanka
29.11.03 .....Turkmenistan-Syria

Group winners and runners-up qualify for finals; China (hosts) and Japan (holders) qualify automatically for finals

EUROPE

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Group A

October 21

Anderlecht (Blg) 1 (Dindane 72)
Celtic (Sco) 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 27,000. **Ref:** Stuchlik (Aut)
Anderlecht: Zitka - Zewlakow, De Boeck, Kompany, Deschacht, Wilhelmsson (Hendrikx 88), Baseggio, Hasi, Kolar (Tihinen 90), Dindane, Mornar. *Sent off: De Boeck 26min.*
Celtic: Hedman - Varga, Balde, McNamara (Valgaeren 46), Agathe, Petrov, Sutton, Lennon (Miller 80), Thompson, Hartson, Larsson.

Lyon (Fra) 1 (Luyindula 88)
Bayern Munich (Ger) 1 (Makaay 25)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 37,659. **Ref:** Michel (Slk)
Lyon: Coupet - Deflandre (Malouda 46), Edmilson, Muller, Reveillere, Govou (Luyindula 68), Diarra, Dhorasoo (Carriere 71), Essien, Juninho, Elber.
Bayern: Kahn - Kuffour, Kovac, Linke, Lizarazu, Deisler, Demichelis (Jeremies 46), Ballack, Ze Roberto (Salihamidzic 90), Santa Cruz, Makaay.

November 5

Bayern Munich 1 (Makaay 15)
Lyon 2 (Juninho 6, Elber 53)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 58,000. **Ref:** Barber (Eng)
Bayern: Kahn - Sagnol (Scholl 73), Kuffour, Kovac, Lizarazu, Salihamidzic, Demichelis (Jeremies 72), Ballack, Ze Roberto, Pizarro (Santa Cruz 67), Makaay.
Lyon: Coupet - Reveillere, Muller, Edmilson, Berthod, Essien (Govou 77), Diarra, Juninho (Carriere 90), Malouda, Elber (Cacapa 79), Luyindula.

Celtic 3 (Larsson 12, Miller 17, Sutton 29)
Anderlecht 1 (Dindane 77)
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 59,057. **Ref:** Vassaras (Gre)
Celtic: Hedman - Varga, Balde, McNamara, Agathe, Miller (Gray 76), Lennon, Sutton, Petrov, Hartson (Maloney 82; Sylla 90), Larsson.
Anderlecht: Zitka - Zewlakow, Tihinen, Kompany, Deschacht, Wilhelmsson, Baseggio, Hendrikx (Kolar 62), Hasi, Mornar, Dindane.

GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lyon	4	2	1	1	4	4	7
Celtic	4	2	0	2	6	4	6
Bayern Munich	4	1	2	1	5	5	5
Anderlecht	4	1	1	2	3	5	4

Nov 25
Anderlecht v Lyon
Celtic v Bayern Munich
Dec 10
Bayern Munich v Anderlecht
Lyon v Celtic

Group B

October 21

Kyiv Dynamo (Ukr) 2 (Shatskikh 27, Bialkevich 64)
Arsenal (Eng) 1 (Henry 80)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 60,000. **Ref:** Plautz (Aut)
Dynamo: Shovkovskyi - Peev, Gavrancic, Fedorov, Nesmachnyi, Husev (Diogo Rincon 64), Dmytrulin (Sablic 33), Leko, Ghioane (Khatskevich 79), Bialkevich, Shatskikh.
Arsenal: Lehmann - Lauren, Campbell, Toure, Cole, Parlour (Ljungberg 74), Edu (Vieira 61), Gilberto Silva (Kanu 74), Pires, Wiltord, Henry.

Lokomotiv Moscow (Rus) 3 (Loskov 2, Ashvetia 50, Khokhlov 57)
Internazionale (Ita) 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Wack (Ger)
Lokomotiv: Ovchinnikov - Evseev (Gurenko 75), Ignashevich, Sennikov, Lekgetho, Maminov, Khokhlov, Buznikin (Pachinin 46), Loskov, Izmailov, Ashvetia.
Inter: Toldo - Cordoba, Cannavaro, Materazzi (Emre 61), Brechet (Coco 72), J Zanetti, Almeyda, C Zanetti, Recoba, Vieri, Cruz (Martins 61).

November 5

Arsenal 1 (Cole 88)
Kyiv Dynamo 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 34,419. **Ref:** Cortez Batista (Por)
Arsenal: Lehmann - Lauren, Toure, Campbell, Cole, Ljungberg (Wiltord 69), Parlour (Kanu 75), Gilberto Silva, Pires, Bergkamp (Edu 90), Henry.
Dynamo: Shovkovskyi - Gavrancic, Peev, Fedorov, Nesmachnyi, Onyshenko (Sablic 20), Leko, Husev (Diogo Rincon 60), Bialkevich, Ghioane, Shatskikh (Nanni 71).

Internazionale 1 (Recoba 14)
Lokomotiv Moscow 1 (Loskov 54)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 22,822. **Ref:** De Bleeckere (Blg)
Inter: Toldo - Adani, Materazzi, Cannavaro, Helveg, Almeyda, C Zanetti (Lamouchi 68), J Zanetti, Recoba (Cruz 76), Vieri, Kily Gonzalez (Karagounis 90).
Lokomotiv: Ovchinnikov - Evseev, Pachinin, Sennikov, Lekgetho, Maminov, Ignashevich, Khokhlov, Loskov, Izmailov (Nizhegorodov 90), Ashvetia (Buznikin 76).

GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Internazionale	4	2	1	1	6	5	7
Kyiv Dynamo	4	2	0	2	5	4	6
Lokomotiv M	4	1	2	1	4	3	5
Arsenal	4	1	1	2	2	5	4

Nov 25
Internazionale v Arsenal
Lokomotiv Moscow v Kyiv Dynamo
Dec 10
Arsenal v Lokomotiv Moscow
Kyiv Dynamo v Internazionale

Group C

October 21

AEK Athens (Gre) 0
PSV Eindhoven (Hol) 1 (Lucius 37)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 11,500. **Ref:** Irvine (NI)
AEK: Mihailidis - Georgeas, Amponsah, Kapsis, Kasapis (Borbokis 78), Katsouranis, Zagorakis, Rusev (Lakis 61), Tsartas, Okkas, Limberopoulos (Ivic 61). *Sent off: Amponsah 65min.*
PSV: Waterreus - Ooijer, Hofland (Colin 63), Bouma, Lee, Lucius, Vogel, Rommedahl, De Jong, Robben, Kezman.

Deportivo La Coruna (Spa) 1 (Diego Tristan 83)
Monaco (Fra) 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 27,000. **Ref:** De Bleeckere (Blg)
Deportivo: Molina - Manuel Pablo, Naybet, Jorge Andrade, Romero, Duscher, Sergio, Victor (Scaloni 80), Luque (Fran 57), Valeron (Pandiani 65), Diego Tristan.
Monaco: Roma - Givet, Squillaci, Evra, Rodriguez, Plasil (Prso 87), Rothen, Bernardi, Cisse, Giuly, Morientes (Adebayor 79).

November 5

Monaco 8 (Rothen 2, Giuly 11, Prso 26, 30, 45, 49, Plasil 47, Cisse 67)
Deportivo La Coruna 3 (Diego Tristan 39, 52, Scaloni 45)
HT: 5-2. **Att:** 16,000. **Ref:** Hauge (Nor)
Monaco: Roma - Givet, Squillaci, Rodriguez, Evra (Ibarra 83), Giuly, Cisse, Bernardi, Rothen, Plasil (Zikos 67), Prso (Adebayor 75).
Deportivo: Molina (Munua 46) - Manuel Pablo (Munitis 46), Naybet, Jorge Andrade, Romero, Mauro Silva, Sergio (Pandiani 60), Scaloni, Valeron, Amavisca, Diego Tristan.

PSV Eindhoven 2 (Bouma 51, Robben 63)
AEK Athens 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 28,000. **Ref:** Plautz (Aut)
PSV: Waterreus - Colin, Hofland, Bouma, Lee, Ooijer, Park, Lucius, Robben, De Jong, Kezman.
AEK: Mihailidis - Georgeas, Kostenoglou, Moras, Kasapis, Lakis (Konstantinidis 69), Zagorakis, Katsouranis, Rusev (Tsartas 32), Okkas (Ivic 78), Limberopoulos.

GROUP C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Monaco	4	3	0	1	14	5	9
Dep La Coruna	4	2	1	1	7	9	7
PSV Eindhoven	4	2	0	2	4	4	6
AEK Athens	4	0	1	3	1	8	1

Nov 25
Deportivo La Coruna v AEK Athens
Monaco v PSV Eindhoven
Dec 10
AEK Athens v Monaco
PSV Eindhoven v Deportivo La Coruna

Group D

October 21

Galatasaray (Tur) 1 (Cihan 9)
Olympiakos (Gre) 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 50,000. **Ref:** Meier (Swi)
Galatasaray: Mondragon - Cesar Prates (Hakan Unsal 69), De Boer, Bulent, Ergun, Sabri (Suat 90), Ayhan, Joao Batista, Cihan, Arif (Petre 76), Hakan Sukur.
Olympiakos: Bucek - Pantos, Antzas, Anatolakis, Venetidis, Mavrogenidis (Tatsis 85), Karembeu, Stoltidis (Kafes 62), Djordjevic, Castillo (Georgiadis 77), Giovanni.

Juventus (Ita) 4 (Trezeguet 3, 63, Di Vaio 7, 45)
Real Sociedad (Spa) 2 (Tudor og 67, De Pedro 80)
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 17,246. **Ref:** Poll (Eng)
Juventus: Buffon - Thuram, Tudor (Montero 75), Iuliano, Zambrotta, Camoranesi (Davids 66), Tacchinardi, Appiah, Nedved, Di Vaio (Birindelli 84), Trezeguet.
Sociedad: Westerveld - Potillon, Jauregi, Schurrer, Aranzabal, Lee (De Pedro 66), Karpin, Xabi Alonso (Aranburu 81), Alkiza, Kovacevic (Nihat 73), Gabilondo.

November 5

Olympiakos 3 (Mavrogenidis 6, Castillo 34, Giovanni 90)
Galatasaray 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 14,000. **Ref:** Michel (Slk)
Olympiakos: Katergiannakis - Georgiadis (Niniadis 89), Antzas, Anatolakis, Venetidis, Mavrogenidis (Kostoulas 90), Karembeu, Stoltidis, Djordjevic, Castillo (Kafes 65), Giovanni. *Sent off: Djordjevic 90min.*
Galatasaray: Mondragon - Cesar Prates (Sabri 81), De Boer, Bulent, Orhan, Cihan (Baljic 40), Petre, Ayhan, Ergun (Lukunku 66), Hasan Sas, Hakan Sukur. *Sent off: Ayhan 88min.*

Real Sociedad 0
Juventus 0
Att: 27,000. **Ref:** Bre (Fra)

Sociedad: Westerveld - Aitor, Jauregi, Schurrer, Aranzabal, Xabi Alonso, Alkiza, Karpin, Nihat, De Pedro (Lee 75), Kovacevic.
Juventus: Buffon - Birindelli, Ferrara, Iuliano, Pessotto (Appiah 69), Conte (Tacchinardi 82), Tudor, Davids, Nedved, Di Vaio (Zalayeta 76), Miccoli.

GROUP D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Juventus	4	3	1	0	8	4	10
Real Sociedad	4	2	1	1	5	5	7
Olympiakos	4	1	0	3	4	4	3
Galatasaray	4	1	0	3	3	7	3

Nov 25
Galatasaray v Juventus
Olympiakos v Real Sociedad
Dec 10
Juventus v Olympiakos
Real Sociedad v Galatasaray

Group E

October 22

Rangers (Sco) 0
Manchester United (Eng) 1 (P Neville 5)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 48,730. **Ref:** Frisk (Swe)
Rangers: Klos - Khizanishvili (Ross 85), Berg, Moore, Ball, Ricksen, Arteta, Vanoli (Nerlinger 67), Lovenkrands, Arveladze, Mols.
Man Utd: Howard - G Neville, Ferdinand, Silvestre, O'Shea, P Neville (Butt 85), Keane, Fortune (Djemba Djemba 90), Scholes, Giggs, Van Nistelrooy.

Stuttgart (Ger) 2 (Szabics 13, Soldo 25)
Panathinaikos (Gre) 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 50,348. **Ref:** Allaerts (Blg)
Stuttgart: Hildebrand - Hinkel, Fernando Meira, Bordon, Lahm, Vranjes (Meissner 77), Soldo, Hleb, Heldt (Tiffert 62), Szabics (Amanatidis 84), Kuranyi.
Panathinaikos: Nikopolidis - Morris, Henriksen, Seitaridis, Michaelsen, Basinas, Zutautas, Fissas, Maric, Munch (Konstantinidis 69), Papadopoulos (Constantinou 46).

November 4

Manchester United 3 (Forlan 6, Van Nistelrooy 44, 60)
Rangers 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 66,707. **Ref:** Collina (Ita)
Man Utd: Howard - G Neville, Ferdinand, Silvestre, Fortune, Cristiano Ronaldo, Keane, P Neville, Giggs (Bellion 67), Van Nistelrooy (Fletcher 76), Forlan (Kleberson 67).
Rangers: Klos - Khizanishvili, Berg, Moore (Ross 67), Ball, Hughes, Arteta, Vanoli (Burke 83), Lovenkrands, Arveladze, Mols (Capucho 57).

Panathinaikos 1 (Constantinou 60)
Stuttgart 3 (Fissas og 68, Kuranyi 75, Hinkel 77)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 6,015. **Ref:** De Santis (Ita)
Panathinaikos: Nikopolidis - Goumas, Henriksen, Fissas, Seitaridis, Michaelsen (Sanmartean 72), Basinas, Zutautas, Maric (Konstantinidis 79), Constantinou, Papadopoulos.
Stuttgart: Hildebrand - Hinkel, Wenzel, Fernando Meira, Lahm, Soldo, Tiffert, Vranjes (Hleb 46), Amanatidis (Heldt 46), Kuranyi, Szabics (Meissner 79).

GROUP E

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Stuttgart	4	3	0	1	8	4	9
Manchester Utd	4	3	0	1	10	2	9
Rangers	4	1	1	2	3	6	4
Panathinaikos	4	0	1	3	2	11	1

Nov 26
Panathinaikos v Manchester United
Stuttgart v Rangers
Dec 9
Manchester United v Stuttgart
Rangers v Panathinaikos

Group F

October 22

Marseille (Fra) 2 (Drogba 24, Marlet 84)
FC Porto (Por) 3 (Maniche 31, Derlei 35, Alenichev 81)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 57,000. **Ref:** Vassaras (Gre)

Marseille: Runje - Perez (Sychev 66), Van Buyten, Meite, Ecker, Meriem, Celestini, Hemdani, Marlet, Drogba, Hossam (Vachousek 67).
Porto: Vitor Baia - Paulo Ferreira, Jorge Costa, Ricardo Carvalho, Nuno Valente, Maniche, Costinha, Deco, Marco Ferreira (Alenichev 73), Derlei (Jankauskas 88), Cesar Peixoto (Bosingwa 65).

Real Madrid (Spa) 1 (Raul 38)
Partizan Belgrade (Ser) 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 58,000. **Ref:** Busacca (Swi)
Real Madrid: Casillas - Michel Salgado, Pavon (Guti 46), Raul Bravo, Roberto Carlos, Ivan Helguera, Figo, Beckham, Zidane (Solari 79), Raul, Ronaldo (Portillo 79).
Partizan: Pantic - Savic, Malbasa, Djordjevic (Brnovic 90), Ognjanovic, Duljaj, Nadj (Cakar 90), Rzasa (Stojanoski 46), Ilic, Iliev, Drulovic.

November 4

Partizan Belgrade 0
Real Madrid 0
Att: 32,000. **Ref:** Bolognino (Ita)
Partizan: Pantic - Savic, Bajic, West, Djordjevic, Duljaj, Malbasa (Rzasa 19), Nadj (Drulovic 67), Ilic, Delibasic (Stojanoski 46), Iliev.
Real Madrid: Casillas - Michel Salgado, Pavon, Raul Bravo, Roberto Carlos (Guti 12), Figo, Ivan Helguera, Beckham, Zidane, Ronaldo, Raul.

FC Porto 1 (Alenichev 21)
Marseille 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 40,000. **Ref:** Poll (Eng)
Porto: Vitor Baia - Paulo Ferreira, Jorge Costa, Ricardo Carvalho, Nuno Valente (Ricardo Costa 60), Alenichev, Costinha, Maniche, Bosingwa (Pedro Mendes 83), McCarthy (Marco Ferreira 63), Derlei.
Marseille: Runje - Meite, Van Buyten, Christanval, Ecker, Perez (Hossam 51), Hemdani, Meriem, Vachousek (Johansen 80), Marlet (Sychev 80), Drogba.

GROUP F

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Real Madrid	4	3	1	0	8	3	10
FC Porto	4	2	1	1	6	6	7
Marseille	4	1	0	3	7	8	3
Partizan Belgrade	4	0	2	2	1	5	2

Nov 26
Marseille v Real Madrid
FC Porto v Partizan Belgrade
Dec 9
Partizan Belgrade v Marseille
Real Madrid v FC Porto

Group G

October 22

Chelsea (Eng) 2 (Lampard 57, Mutu 65)
Lazio (Ita) 1 (Inzaghi 39)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 40,405. **Ref:** Hauge (Nor)
Chelsea: Cudicini - Johnson, Gallas, Terry, Bridge, Lampard, Makelele, Veron (Gronkjaer 64), Duff (Geremi 78), Mutu (J Cole 87), Gudjohnsen.
Lazio: Peruzzi - Oddo, Stam, Mihajlovic, Favalli, Sergio Conceicao, Albertini, Stankovic (Liverani 84), Zauri (Fiore 74), Corradi, Inzaghi (Muzzi 68).

Sparta Prague (Cze) 2 (Zelenka 58, Poborsky 84)
Besiktas (Tur) 1 (Pancu pen 60)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 14,512. **Ref:** Mejuto Gonzalez (Spa)
Sparta: Blazek - Pergl, Hubschman, Johana, Labant, Kovac, Nemec, Sionko (Jun 88), Zelenka (Michalik 90), Poborsky, Kincl (I Gluscevic 86).
Besiktas: Cordoba - Emre, Ronaldo, Zago, Tayfur, Giunti, Kaan Dobra, Pancu, Ibrahim, Sergen (Hassan 81), Ahmet Dursun (Sinan 65).

November 4

Besiktas 1 (Ronaldo 82)
Sparta Prague 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 18,000. **Ref:** Busacca (Swi)
Besiktas: Cordoba - Zago, Ronaldo, Ahmet Yildirim, Giunti, Kaan Dobra (Hassan 62), Tayfur, Pancu, Ibrahim (Tumer 72), Ilhan, Sergen (Ahmet Dursun 90).
Sparta: Blazek - Pergl, Hubschman, Johana, Labant, Kovac, Krmas (I Gluscevic 84), Sionko (Jun 60), Zelenka, Poborsky, Kincl (Michalik 77).

Lazio 0
Chelsea 4 (Crespo 15, Gudjohnsen 70, Duff 75, Lampard 80)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 48,485. **Ref:** Ivanov (Rus)
Lazio: Sereni - Zauri, Fernando Couto, Mihajlovic, Favalli, Fiore (Negro 59), Albertini (Muzzi 71), Liverani, Stankovic, Corradi, Inzaghi (Claudio Lopez 71). *Sent off: Mihajlovic 53min.*
Chelsea: Cudicini - Johnson, Terry, Gallas, Bridge, Makelele, Lampard, Duff, Veron (J Cole 75), Crespo (Gudjohnsen 67), Mutu (Gronkjaer 57). *Sent off: Johnson 90min.*

GROUP G

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Chelsea	4	3	0	1	7	3	9
Besiktas	4	2	0	2	4	4	6
Sparta Prague	4	1	1	2	4	5	4
Lazio	4	1	1	2	5	8	4

Nov 26
Chelsea v Sparta Prague
Lazio v Besiktas
Dec 9
Besiktas v Chelsea
Sparta Prague v Lazio

Group H

October 22

Ajax (Hol) 1 (Ibrahimovic 53)
Celta Vigo (Spa) 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 48,514. **Ref:** Merk (Ger)
Ajax: Lobont - Trabelsi (De Jong 64), Pasanen, Van Damme, Maxwell, Pienaar, Galasek, Sneijder, Van der Vaart (Mitea 39), Sonck (Yakubu 79), Ibrahimovic.
Celta: Pinto - Velasco, Caceres (Angel 85), Berizzo, Silvinho, Luccin, Giovanella (Catanha 81), Jesuli, Mostovoi, Juanfran, Milosevic.

Milan (Ita) 0
Club Brugge (Blg) 1 (Mendoza 33)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 43,823. **Ref:** Ovrebo (Nor)
Milan: Dida - Cafu, Nesta, Maldini, Pancaro, Brocchi, Pirlo, Seedorf (Serginho 62), Kaka (Rui Costa 62), Shevchenko (Tomasson 75), Inzaghi.
Brugge: Verlinden - Maertens, Simons, Rozehnal, De Cock, Clement, Ceh (Stoica 90), Gvozdenovic, Van der Heyden, Martens (Verheyen 79), Mendoza (Saeternes 79).

November 4

Celta Vigo 3 (Luccin pen 25, Milosevic 39, Vagner 63)
Ajax 2 (Sonck 53, Van der Vaart 82)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 21,572. **Ref:** Veissiere (Fra)
Celta: Pinto - Angel, Caceres, Sergio, Silvinho, Luccin, Vagner (Contreras 85), Jesuli (Lopez 83), Mostovoi (Oubina 90), Juanfran, Milosevic.
Ajax: Lobont - Grygera, Yakubu (Heitinga 65), Escude, Maxwell, De Jong, Galasek (Wamberto 79), Van der Vaart, Mitea, Sonck, Ibrahimovic (Litmanen 70). *Sent off: Grygera 90min.*

Club Brugge 0
Milan 1 (Kaka 86)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 40,000. **Ref:** Fandel (Ger)
Brugge: Verlinden - De Cock, Maertens, Simons, Rozehnal, Van der Heyden, Verheyen, Clement (Saeternes 77), Ceh (Stoica 62), Gvozdenovic, Mendoza.
Milan: Dida - Cafu, Nesta, Maldini (Costacurta 35), Pancaro, Gattuso, Pirlo, Seedorf, Kaka (Ambrosini 87), Shevchenko, Tomasson (Simic 42). *Sent off: Nesta 38min.*

GROUP H

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Milan	4	2	1	1	2	1	7
Ajax	4	2	0	2	5	4	6
Celta Vigo	4	1	2	1	4	4	5
Club Brugge	4	1	1	2	2	4	4

Nov 26
Ajax v Milan
Celta Vigo v Club Brugge
Dec 9
Club Brugge v Ajax
Milan v Celta Vigo

UEFA CUP

1st rnd, 2nd legs

October 15

Aris Salonika (Gre) 2 (Koltsidas 44, Lazanas 85)
Zimbru Chisinau (Mol) 1 (Shishelov 19)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Yefet (Isr)
Aris 3-2 on agg

Artmedia Petrzalka (Slk) 1 (Krejci 90)
Bordeaux (Fra) 1 (Darcheville 86)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Delevic (Ser)
Bordeaux 3-2 on agg

Barcelona (Spa) 8 (Ronaldinho 7, 20, 57, Motta 41, Luis Enrique 64, 75, Saviola 73, 89)
Matador Puchov (Slk) 0
HT: 3-0. **Ref:** Vollquartz (Den)
Barcelona 9-1 on agg

Basle (Swi) 1 (Streller 95 - silver goal)
Malatyaspor (Tur) 2 (Kocak 64, 84)
Aet. **HT:** 0-0. **90mins:** 0-2. **Ref:** Juhos (Hun)
Basle 3-2 on agg

Benfica (Por) 1 (Feher 58)
La Louviere (Blg) 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Garibian (Fra)
Sent off: Mamouni (La Louviere) 90min
Benfica 2-1 on agg

Blackburn Rovers (Eng) 1 (Jansen 65)
Genclerbirligi (Tur) 1 (Mustafa 66)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Braamhaar (Hol)
Genclerbirligi 4-2 on agg

Borussia Dortmund (Ger) 1 (Ricken 17)
Austria Wien (Aut) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Almeida Costa (Por)
Dortmund 3-1 on agg

FC Copenhagen (Den) 1 (Nielsen pen 90)
Ferencvaros (Hun) 1 (Lipcsei 84)
Aet. **HT:** 0-0. **90mins:** 1-1. **Ref:** Dobrinov (Bul)
Sent off: Vukmir (Ferencvaros) 90min
Agg 2-2. Copenhagen 3-2 on pens

Debrecen (Hun) 3 (Granic og 45, Kiss 45, Habi 90)
Varteks (Cro) 2 (Safaric 26, Vuckovic 58)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Richards (Wal)
Debrecen 6-3 on agg

Dnipro Dnipropetrovsk (Ukr) 3 (Mykhailenko 5, Rykunon 68, Venhlynskyi 79)
Hamburg (Ger) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** McDonald (Sco)
Dnipro 4-2 on agg

Esbjerg (Den) 1 (L Jorgensen 88)
Moscow Spartak (Rus) 1 (Pavlyuchenko 43)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Balaj (Rom)
Sent off: Pavlyuchenko (Spartak) 46min
Spartak 3-1 on agg

Grazer AK (Aut) 1 (Ramusch 32)
Valerenga (Nor) 1 (Berre 59)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Stanisic (Ser)
Agg 1-1. Valerenga on away goals

Groclin Grodzisk (Pol) 1 (Rasiak 84)
Hertha Berlin (Ger) 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Paraty Silva (Por)
Groclin 1-0 on agg

Hajduk Split (Cro) 0
Grasshopper (Swi) 0
Ref: Bossen (Hol)
Sent off: Racunica (Hajduk) 38min
Agg 1-1. Hajduk on away goals

Hapoel Tel Aviv (Isr) 0
Gaziantepspor (Tur) 0
Ref: Godulyan (Ukr)
(Played in Rotterdam, Holland)
Gaziantepspor 1-0 on agg

Lens (Fra) 5 (Coridon 14, Moreira 45, Utaka pen 52, Coulibaly 56, Bakari 90)
Cementarnica (Mac) 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Kapitanis (Cyp)
Lens 6-0 on agg

Levski Sofia (Bul) 4 (Chilikov 23, G Ivanov 75, Simonovic 79, Demba 90)
Hapoel Ramat-Gan (Isr) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Douros (Gre)
Levski 5-0 on agg

Liverpool (Eng) 3 (Le Tallec 30, Heskey 37, Kewell 47)
Olimpija Ljubljana (Sln) 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Messner (Aut)
Liverpool 4-1 on agg

Lokeren (Blg) 0
Manchester City (Eng) 1 (Anelka pen 18)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Ledentu (Fra)
Man City 4-2 on agg

Lyn Oslo (Nor) 0
PAOK Salonika (Gre) 3 (Yiasoumi 51, Koutsis 61, Vokolos 68)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Ceferin (Sln)
PAOK 3-1 on agg

Mallorca (Spa) 4 (Eto'o 30, 62, 67, Correa 89)
APOEL Nicosia (Cyp) 2 (Okkarides 10, Amanatidis 90)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Skomina (Sln)
Mallorca 6-3 on agg

Malmo (Swe) 0
Sporting Lisbon (Por) 1 (Liedson 49)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Rennie (Eng)
Sent off: Hoiland (Malmo) 45min
Sporting 3-0 on agg

Molde (Nor) 3 (Hoseth pen 35, pen 78, Berg Hestad 51)
Uniao Leiria (Por) 1 (Maciel 58)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Kassai (Hun)
Molde 3-2 on agg

MTK (Hun) 0
Dinamo Zagreb (Cro) 0
Ref: Jakobsson (Ice)
Dinamo 3-1 on agg

NAC Breda (Hol) 0
Newcastle United (Eng) 1 (Robert 86)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Berntsen (Nor)
Newcastle 6-0 on agg

NEC Nijmegen (Hol) 1 (Zonneveld 33)
Wisla Krakow (Pol) 2 (Frankowski 45, 68)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Szabo (Hun)
Sent off: Hersi 63min, Ax 85min, Zonneveld 86min (all NEC)
Wisla 4-2 on agg

Neuchatel Xamax (Swi) 0
Auxerre (Fra) 1 (Lachuer 52)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** D'Urso (Eng)
Auxerre 2-0 on agg

Nordsjaelland (Den) 0
Panionios (Gre) 1 (Raguel 90)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Leuba (Swi)
Panionios 3-1 on agg

Parma (Ita) 3 (Gilardino 43, 47, Marchionni 73)
Metalurh Donetsk (Ukr) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Sundell (Swe)
Parma 4-1 on agg

Perugia (Ita) 1 (Margiotta 72)
Dundee (Sco) 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Hrinak (Slk)
Perugia 3-1 on agg

Publikum (Sln) 2 (Koren 42, 59)
Maccabi Haifa (Isr) 2 (Tal 62, Rosso 84)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Esquinas Torres (Spa)
Maccabi 4-3 on agg

Red Star Belgrade (Ser) 4 (Zigic 3, Vidic 12, 86, Djordjic 27)
OB Odense (Den) 3 (Stokholm 11, Hojer 39, Lindrup 78)
HT: 3-2. **Ref:** Layec (Fra)
Red Star 6-5 on agg

Rosenborg (Nor) 6 (Karadas 17, Brattbakk 29, 90, Hoftun 45, Solli 57, Lukasevics og 90)
Ventspils (Lat) 0
HT: 3-0. **Ref:** Vuorela (Fin)
Rosenborg 10-1 on agg

Shakhtar Donetsk (Ukr) 2 (Aghahowa 18, 45)
Dinamo Bucharest (Rom) 3 (Niculescu 28, Marica 75, Danciulescu 86)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Mikulski (Pol)
Sent off: Gleveckas (Shakhtar) 88min
Dinamo 5-2 on agg

Slavia Prague (Cze) 2 (Dostalek 6, Adauto 23)
Sartid (Ser) 1 (Mirosavljevic 47)
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Van Egmond (Hol)
Slavia 4-2 on agg

Sochaux (Fra) 2 (Monsoreau 58, Santos 82)
MyPa (Fin) 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Dereli (Tur)
Sent off: Okkonen (MyPa) 47min
Sochaux 3-0 on agg

Steaua Bucharest (Rom) 1 (Raducanu 84)
Southampton (Eng) 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Johannesson (Swe)
Steaua 2-1 on agg

Torpedo Moscow (Rus) 1 (Oper 11)
CSKA Sofia (Bul) 1 (Dimitrov 90)
Aet. **HT:** 1-0. **90mins:** 1-1. **Ref:** Beck (Lie)
Sent off: Todorov (CSKA) 68min
Agg 2-2. Torpedo 3-2 on pens

Trabzonspor (Tur) 2 (Gokdeniz 72, Fatih 82)
Villarreal (Spa) 3 (Anderson 60, Jose Mari 66, 90)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Nobs (Swi)
Villarreal 3-2 on agg

Udinese (Ita) 1 (Bertotto 14)
Salzburg (Aut) 2 (Hassler 61, Eder 77)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Briakos (Gre)
Agg 2-2. Salzburg on away goals

Valencia (Spa) 1 (Mista 71)
AIK Stockholm (Swe) 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Verbist (Blg)
Valencia 2-0 on agg

Vardar Skopje (Mac) 1 (Zaharievski 40)
Roma (Ita) 1 (Faioli 63)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Liba (Cze)
Roma 5-1 on agg

Zeljeznicar (Bos) 0
Hearts (Sco) 0
Ref: Stredak (Slk)
Hearts 2-0 on agg

MSK Zilina (Slk) 0
Utrecht (Hol) 4 (Van der Haar 20, 66, Lamey 79, Tanghe 82)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Trivkovic (Cro)
Utrecht 6-0 on agg

October 16

Karnten (Aut) 0
Feyenoord (Hol) 1 (Buffel 15)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Loizou (Cyp)
Feyenoord 3-1 on agg

Schalke (Ger) 1 (Hanke 77)
Kamen Ingrad (Cro) 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Bartolo Benquerenca (Por)
Schalke 1-0 on agg

Teplice (Cze) 1 (Bencik 71)
Kaiserslautern (Ger) 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Hansson (Swe)
Teplice 3-1 on agg

Viktoria Zizkov (Cze) 0
Brondby (Den) 1 (Daugaard 88)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Lehner (Aut)
Brondby 2-0 on agg

2nd rnd, 1st legs

October 29

Rosenborg 0
Red Star Belgrade 0
Ref: Bennett (Eng)
Sent off: Berg (Rosenborg) 57min

November 6

Basle 2 (Cantaluppi 12, Chipperfield 16)
Newcastle United 3 (Robert 14, Bramble 38, Ameobi 76)
HT: 2-2. **Ref:** Ovrebo (Nor)

Benfica 3 (Nuno Gomes 18, 54, Geovanni 51)
Molde 1 (Berg Hestad 76)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Albrecht (Ger)

Bordeaux 0
Hearts 1 (De Vries 79)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Jakobsson (Ice)

Borussia Dortmund 2 (Senesie 68, Ewerthon 76)
Sochaux 2 (Santos 12, Frau 27)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Hrinak (Slk)

FC Copenhagen 1 (Santos 32)
Mallorca 2 (Albrechtsen og 28, Nagore 74)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Rosetti (Ita)

Dinamo Zagreb 0
Dnipro Dnipropetrovsk 2 (Venhlynskyi 8, Maxymyuk 84)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Stuchlik (Aut)

Feyenoord 0
Teplice 2 (Dolezal 3, Rezek 57)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Briakos (Gre)
Sent off: Swerts (Feyenoord) 2min

Gaziantepspor 3 (Ayhan 43, Bouazizi 59, Lazarov 65)
Lens 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Delevic (Ser)

Genclerbirligi 1 (Veysel 55)
Sporting Lisbon 1 (Liedson 50)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Corpodean (Rom)

Manchester City 1 (Anelka 5)
Groclin Grodzisk 1 (Mila 65)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Kasnaferis (Gre)

Moscow Spartak 4 (Pjanovic 23, 62, Kalinichenko 59, Pavlenko 73)
Dinamo Bucharest 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Van Egmond (Hol)
Sent off: Badea (Dinamo) 89min

Panionios 0
Barcelona 3 (Luis Garcia 43, Kluivert 47, Xavi 90)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Granat (Pol)

PAOK Salonika 1 (Karadimos 8)
Debrecen 1 (Bajzat 25)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Trivkovic (Cro)

Perugia 2 (Margiotta 47, pen 86)
Aris Salonika 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Carmona Mendez (Spa)
Sent off: Karaliopoulos (Aris) 86min

Roma 1 (Cassano 90)
Hajduk Split 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Medina Cantalejo (Spa)

Salzburg 0
Parma 4 (Filippini pen 60, Gilardino 65, Nakata 84, Rosina 87)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Iturralde Gonzalez (Spa)

Schalke 2 (Hanke 60, 73)
Brondby 1 (Jakobsson 35)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Sars (Fra)

Slavia Prague 2 (Kuka 22, Fort 90)
Levski Sofia 2 (G Ivanov 77, Muller og 90)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** McCurry (Sco)
Sent off: Pitak (Slavia) 85min

Steaua Bucharest 1 (Raducanu 68)
Liverpool 1 (Traore 22)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Farina (Ita)

Utrecht 0
Auxerre 0
Ref: Irvine (NI)

Valencia 0
Maccabi Haifa 0
Ref: Clark (Sco)

Valerenga 0
Wisla Krakow 0
Ref: Shebek (Ukr)
Sent off: Gorawski (Wisla) 83min

Villarreal 2 (Riquelme 51, 68)
Torpedo Moscow 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Bozinovski (Mac)

2nd legs, November 27

AUSTRIA

Oct 18: Admira 4 Rapid Wien 2; Salzburg 0 Pasching 2; Sturm Graz 1 Bregenz 1.
Oct 19: Karnten 1 Mattersburg 2; Austria Wien 0 Grazer AK 1.
Oct 25: Bregenz 3 Karnten 2; Grazer AK 1 Salzburg 0; Mattersburg 0 Austria Wien 1; Pasching 3 Admira 0.
Oct 26: Rapid Wien 2 Sturm Graz 0.
Oct 29: Austria Wien 2 Rapid Wien 0; Bregenz 2 Mattersburg 1; Karnten 1 Grazer AK 4; Salzburg 1 Admira 2; Sturm Graz 0 Pasching 1.
Nov 1: Admira 0 Austria Wien 2; Pasching 3 Karnten 0; Rapid Wien 3 Mattersburg 1.
Nov 2: Salzburg 5 Sturm Graz 0; Grazer AK 2 Bregenz 0.

AUSTRIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rapid Wien	16	11	2	3	31	20	35
Austria Wien	16	9	4	3	27	12	31
Grazer AK	16	9	3	4	27	18	30
Bregenz	16	8	3	5	26	25	27
Pasching	16	7	3	6	25	23	24
Mattersburg	16	5	5	6	20	24	20
Admira	16	5	4	7	22	21	19
Salzburg	16	4	1	11	20	24	13
Sturm Graz	16	3	4	9	15	25	13
Karnten	16	2	5	9	13	34	11

BELGIUM

Friday, October 17

Charleroi 0
Anderlecht 1 (Dindane 12) Att: 14,000

Saturday, October 18

Club Brugge 4 (Lange 11, 28, Mendoza 32, Martens 82)
Westerlo 0 Att: 22,611

Germinal Beerschot 2 (Snelders 44, 78)
Beveren 1 (Ne 75) Att: 8,000

Lokeren 3 (Kristinsson 5, Bance 45, 53)
Heusden-Zolder 0 Att: 5,000

Mons 1 (Mounard 52)
Royal Antwerp 0 Att: 5,000

Mouscron 2 (Mpenza 31, Gregoire 64)
St Truiden 1 (Vrancken 71) Att: 6,200

Standard 2 (Mpenza 45, Ndikumana og 60)
Gent 0 Att: 13,000

Sunday, October 19

Genk 3 (Roussel 19, Thijs 26, 85)
Cercle Brugge 1 (Jbari 88) Att: 23,251

Lierse 1 (Schaessens 67)
La Louviere 1 (Tilmant 64) Att: 6,500

Saturday, October 25

Anderlecht 4 (Baseggio 5, 24, Dindane 20, Mornar 53)
Germinal Beerschot 0 Att: 23,401

Beveren 0
Mouscron 3 (Dugardein 5, Zewlakow 15, Mpenza 90) Att: 3,000

Gent 0
Mons 0 Att: 7,007

La Louviere 5 (Van den Bossche 1, Murcy 14, Tilmant 66, Djamba-Shango 68, Ishiaku 89)
Genk 2 (Vandenbergh 42, Thijs 64) Att: 5,000

Royal Antwerp 3 (Goots 35, pen 81, Pivaljevic 59)
Lierse 1 (Schaessens pen 83) Att: 6,000

Sunday, October 26

Cercle Brugge 2 (De Wulf 60, Jbari 75)
Lokeren 2 (Gretarsson 33, 67) Att: 4,300

Heusden-Zolder 4 (De Camargo 13, 89, De Conde 34, Janssen 82)
Club Brugge 2 (Ceh 9, Gvozdenovic 61) Att: 5,820

St Truiden 1 (Van Geel 21)
Standard 2 (Da Silva Moreira 26, 74) Att: 10,500

Westerlo 2 (Dosunmu 51, Haraldsen 89)
Charleroi 1 (Traore 41) Att: 3,800

Friday, October 31

Lierse 0
Gent 0 Att: 6,250

Mouscron 0
Anderlecht 1 (Vanderhaeghe 33) Att: 10,654

Saturday, November 1

Genk 3 (Vandenbergh 20, Thijs 26, Roussel 78)
Royal Antwerp 1 (Pivaljevic 21) Att: 23,478

Germinal Beerschot 0
Westerlo 2 (Verheyen 39, Natama 88) Att: 8,500

Lokeren 2 (Doba 6, Kristinsson 45)
Club Brugge 0 Att: 7,000

Mons 3 (Ban 21, Gomis 85, Kenmogne 89)
St Truiden 4 (Janssen 16, Buvens 53, Vrancken 64, Mbonabucya 88) Att: 4,800

Standard 4 (Kaklamanos 7, Walasiak 13, Datti 72, Bangoura 84)
Beveren 0 Att: 15,000

Sunday, November 2

Cercle Brugge 2 (Arijs 55, Jbari 72)
La Louviere 1 (Mamouni 71) Att: 4,000

Charleroi 2 (Dufer 31, Gilson 89)
Heusden-Zolder 1 (Origi 15) Att: 7,000

BELGIUM

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Anderlecht	11	10	1	0	32	6	31
Genk	11	7	2	2	24	14	23
Standard	11	7	1	3	20	9	22
Mouscron	11	5	4	2	19	11	19
Club Brugge	11	5	3	3	23	14	18
Westerlo	11	5	3	3	16	17	18
St Truiden	11	4	4	3	15	14	16
La Louviere	11	3	6	2	16	11	15
Gent	11	3	6	2	13	11	15
Lierse	11	3	5	3	12	13	14
Cercle Brugge	11	3	5	3	8	12	14
Germinal B	11	3	4	4	9	12	13
Royal Antwerp	11	3	1	7	8	23	10
Mons	11	1	6	4	10	17	9
Lokeren	11	2	3	6	12	20	9
Beveren	11	3	0	8	11	25	9
Charleroi	11	1	4	6	5	11	7
Heusden-Zolder	11	1	2	8	7	20	5

LEADING GOALSCORERS
9 Andres Mendoza (Club Brugge)
7 Aruna Dindane (Anderlecht)
7 Cedric Roussel (Genk)
7 Bernd Thijs (Genk)

BULGARIA

Oct 17: Lokomotiv Sofia 2 Slavia 2.
Oct 18: Botev 0 Marek 2; Chernomorets 3 Makedonska 1; Rodopa 1 Lokomotiv Plovdiv 5; Belasitsa 3 Cherno More 1.
Oct 19: Spartak Varna 0 Lovech 1; Vidima-Rakovski 0 CSKA 1; Levski 3 Naftex 0.
Oct 24: Lovech 2 Cherno More 0; Lokomotiv Plovdiv 2 Belasitsa 0; Naftex 5 Rodopa 0; Slavia 1 Levski 2; CSKA 3 Lokomotiv Sofia 0; Marek 1 Chernomorets 0; Spartak Varna 4 Botev 2.
Oct 25: Makedonska 0 Vidima-Rakovski 0.
Oct 31: Botev 1 Lovech 1; Chernomorets 0 Spartak Varna 0; Vidima-Rakovski 1 Marek 3; Lokomotiv Sofia 1 Makedonska 0; Levski 1 CSKA 1; Rodopa 1 Slavia 3; Belasitsa 0 Naftex 3; Cherno More 1 Lokomotiv Plovdiv 2.

BULGARIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lok Plovdiv	11	10	1	0	29	7	31
CSKA	11	8	2	1	25	9	26
Slavia	11	7	1	3	25	15	22
Levski	11	6	4	1	16	7	22
Lovech	11	6	4	1	14	7	22
Naftex	11	5	2	4	22	13	17
Marek	11	5	0	6	16	20	15
Spartak Varna	11	4	2	5	15	15	14
Lok Sofia	11	3	5	3	18	19	14
Vidima-Rakovski	11	2	4	5	13	18	10
Cherno More	11	2	4	5	14	22	10
Makedonska	11	3	1	7	14	22	10
Rodopa	11	3	1	7	11	22	10
Chernomorets	11	2	3	6	11	19	9
Belasitsa	11	2	1	8	10	23	7
Botev	11	2	1	8	15	30	7

CROATIA

Oct 18: Hajduk 3 Zadar 1; Zagreb 1 Slaven 1; Inker 1 Rijeka 1; Cibalia 2 Marsonia 4; Varteks 0 Dinamo 2.
Oct 20: Kamen Ingrad 2 Osijek 0.
Oct 25: Zadar 2 Dinamo 2; Varteks 1 Marsonia 1; Cibalia 0 Rijeka 1; Inker 1 Osijek 1; Kamen Ingrad 2 Slaven 0; Zagreb 0 Hajduk 2.
Nov 2: Zagreb 3 Zadar 1; Slaven 1 Inker 1; Osijek 2 Cibalia 1; Rijeka 0 Varteks 0; Marsonia 1 Dinamo 3; Hajduk 1 Kamen Ingrad 0.

CROATIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dinamo	13	9	4	0	31	9	31
Hajduk	13	10	1	2	25	10	31
Kamen Ingrad	13	6	2	5	21	13	20
Inker	13	4	6	3	16	14	18
Rijeka	13	3	7	3	14	12	16
Osijek	13	5	1	7	19	24	16
Slaven	13	3	6	4	11	11	15
Varteks	13	3	5	5	11	16	14
Zagreb	13	3	4	6	14	22	13
Zadar	13	3	4	6	20	30	13
Marsonia	13	3	4	6	15	28	13
Cibalia	13	3	2	8	15	23	11

CZECH REPUBLIC

Oct 18: Ostrava 3 Pribram 1; Synot 3 Olomouc 2; Liberec 2 Ceske Budejovice 1; Slavia 4 Opava 1; Chmel Blsany 3 Jablonec 1; Plzen 0 Zlin 0.
Oct 19: Zizkov 0 Sparta 1.
Oct 20: Brno 2 Teplice 1.
Oct 25: Teplice 1 Ostrava 1; Pribram 1 Chmel Blsany 2; Olomouc 2 Slavia 0; Opava 2 Plzen 0; Ceske Budejovice 2 Zizkov 0; Synot 2 Liberec 1; Jablonec 2 Zlin 1.
Oct 27: Sparta 1 Brno 0
Nov 1: Ostrava 2 Olomouc 1; Liberec 3 Opava 1; Chmel Blsany 2 Ceske Budejovice 2; Plzen 2 Teplice 0; Brno 1 Jablonec 1; Zlin 1 Sparta 0.
Nov 2: Zizkov 1 Pribram 0.
Nov 3: Slavia 2 Synot 0.

CZECH REPUBLIC

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ostrava	13	9	4	0	27	10	31
Sparta	13	7	4	2	21	7	25
Slavia	13	7	2	4	19	9	23
Olomouc	13	6	3	4	23	13	21
Liberec	13	5	5	3	15	11	20
Brno	13	5	5	3	17	14	20
Teplice	13	5	5	3	16	13	20
Zlin	13	5	3	5	13	14	18
Synot	13	4	4	5	16	20	16
Ceske Budejovice	13	4	3	6	16	19	15
Pribram	13	4	2	7	16	15	14
Opava	13	4	2	7	13	25	14
Jablonec	13	2	7	4	9	17	13
Plzen	13	3	4	6	12	22	13
Zizkov	13	3	2	8	8	17	11
Chmel Blsany	13	2	3	8	14	29	9

DENMARK

Oct 18: Frem 5 Nordsjaelland 1.
Oct 19: AB 0 AaB 3; Midtjylland 0 Herfolge 2; Viborg 1 Esbjerg 2; AGF 1 Brondby 2; FC Copenhagen 2 OB 2.
Oct 22: AaB 0 Frem 0; Brondby 1 Viborg 0; Esbjerg 3 AB 1; Nordsjaelland 1 Midtjylland 7; Herfolge 0 FC Copenhagen 1; OB 4 AGF 2.
Oct 25: Herfolge 2 OB 2.
Oct 26: AB 0 Brondby 1; Midtjylland 2 AaB 3; Frem 0 Esbjerg 4; Viborg 4 AGF 0; FC Copenhagen 2 Nordsjaelland 0.
Oct 29: AaB 0 FC Copenhagen 1; Brondby 3 Frem 1; Esbjerg 2 Midtjylland 0; Nordsjaelland 1 Herfolge 1; OB 4 Viborg 2; AGF 3 AB 1.
Nov 1: Midtjylland 0 Brondby 2.
Nov 2: Nordsjaelland 3 OB 0; AB 0 Viborg 3; Herfolge 3 AaB 3; Frem 1 AGF 2; FC Copenhagen 0 Esbjerg 1.

DENMARK

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Brondby	16	12	2	2	27	9	38
Esbjerg	16	11	3	2	30	14	36
FC Copenhagen	16	9	4	3	23	12	31
OB	16	8	4	4	34	23	28
AaB	16	7	4	5	21	18	25
Midtjylland	16	7	2	7	28	23	23
Viborg	16	5	4	7	30	27	19
AGF	16	6	1	9	24	35	19
Herfolge	16	4	5	7	17	21	17
Nordsjaelland	16	3	5	8	18	30	14
Frem	16	4	1	11	17	32	13
AB	16	2	1	13	11	36	7

ENGLAND

Tuesday, October 14

Birmingham 0
Chelsea 0 Att: 29,460

Saturday, October 18

Arsenal 2 (Edu 5, Henry 75)
Chelsea 1 (Crespo 8) Att: 38,172

Fulham 0
Wolverhampton 0 Att: 17,031

Leeds 0
Manchester Utd 1 (Keane 81) Att: 40,153

Manchester City 6 (Wright-Phillips 27, 56, Distin 48, Anelka 58, 72, Reyna 84)
Bolton 2 (Nolan 25, Ivan Campo 60) Att: 47,101

Middlesbrough 0
Newcastle 1 (Ameobi 21) Att: 34,081

Portsmouth 1 (Berger 4)
Liverpool 0 Att: 20,123

Sunday, October 19

Birmingham 0
Aston Villa 0 Att: 29,546

Everton 0
Southampton 0 Att: 35,775

Leicester 1 (Dickov 38)
Tottenham 2 (Mabizela 79, Kanoute 90) Att: 31,521

Monday, October 20

Blackburn 0
Charlton 1 (Hreidarsson 33) Att: 19,939

Tuesday, October 21

Fulham 2 (Clark 6, Saha 8)
Newcastle 3 (Robert 16, Shearer pen 51, 56) Att: 16,506

Saturday, October 25

Aston Villa 0
Everton 0 Att: 36,146

Bolton 0
Birmingham 1 (Forssell 31) Att: 25,023

Chelsea 1 (Hasselbaink 34)
Manchester City 0 Att: 41,040

Liverpool 3 (Owen 35, Murphy 57, Sinama-Pongolle 84)
Leeds 1 (Smith 42) Att: 43,599

Manchester Utd 1 (Forlan 45)
Fulham 3 (Clark 3, Malbranque 66, Inamoto 79) Att: 67,727

Newcastle 3 (Speed 17, Shearer pen 28, Ameobi 61)
Portsmouth 0 Att: 52,161

Southampton 2 (Beattie 59, Griffit 87)
Blackburn 0 Att: 31,620

Wolverhampton 4 (Cameron 52, pen 60, Rae 68, Camara 86)
Leicester 3 (Ferdinand 12, 15, Scimeca 35) Att: 28,578

Sunday, October 26

Charlton 1 (Di Canio pen 28)
Arsenal 1 (Henry 39) Att: 26,660

Tottenham 0
Middlesbrough 0 Att: 32,643

Saturday, November 1

Everton 0
Chelsea 1 (Mutu 49) Att: 40,189

Leeds 1 (Smith 64)
Arsenal 4 (Henry 8, 33, Pires 17, Gilberto Silva 50) Att: 36,491

Manchester Utd 3 (Forlan 37, Cristiano Ronaldo 80, Keane 82)
Portsmouth 0 Att: 67,639

Middlesbrough 2 (Mendieta 73, Juninho 83)
Wolverhampton 0 Att: 30,305

Newcastle 1 (Robert 45)
Aston Villa 1 (Dublin 11) Att: 51,975

Southampton 0
Manchester City 2 (Fowler 4, Wanchope 85) Att: 31,952

Tottenham 0
Bolton 1 (Nolan 73) Att: 35,191

Sunday, November 2

Fulham 1 (Saha 40)
Liverpool 2 (Heskey 17, Murphy pen 89) Att: 17,682

Leicester 2 (Bent 75, Howey 82)
Blackburn 0 Att: 30,975

Monday, November 3

Birmingham 1 (Dugarry 64)
Charlton 2 (Holland 11, 59) Att: 27,225

ENGLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arsenal	11	8	3	0	23	9	27
Chelsea	11	8	2	1	21	9	26
Man Utd	11	8	1	2	21	6	25
Birmingham	11	5	4	2	10	7	19
Man City	11	5	3	3	22	12	18
Fulham	11	5	3	3	21	15	18
Charlton	11	5	3	3	16	14	18
Liverpool	11	5	2	4	17	12	17
Newcastle	11	4	4	3	16	13	16
Southampton	11	4	4	3	10	7	16
Portsmouth	11	3	3	5	11	15	12
Tottenham	11	3	3	5	10	14	12
Aston Villa	11	2	5	4	9	13	11
Middlesbrough	11	3	2	6	9	15	11
Bolton	11	2	5	4	9	19	11
Everton	11	2	4	5	12	15	10
Wolverhampton	11	2	3	6	7	23	9
Leicester	11	2	2	7	16	21	8
Blackburn	11	2	2	7	15	21	8
Leeds	11	2	2	7	10	25	8

LEADING GOALSCORERS
10 Thierry Henry (Arsenal)
9 Alan Shearer (Newcastle)
8 Nicolas Anelka (Manchester City)
8 Michael Owen (Liverpool)
8 Ruud Van Nistelrooy (Manchester Utd)

ESTONIA

ESTONIA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Flora Tallinn	28	24	4	0	105	21	76
Tallinna VMK	28	20	5	3	82	26	65
Levadia Maardu	28	15	4	9	54	30	49
Trans Narva	28	14	5	9	58	43	47
Tulevik Viljandi	28	8	6	14	44	56	30
Levadia Tallinn	28	8	4	16	44	63	28
Valga	28	3	8	17	25	63	17
Kuressaare	28	1	2	25	11	121	5

FAROE ISLANDS

FAROE ISLANDS – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
HB	18	12	5	1	41	17	41
B36	18	12	1	5	38	20	37
B68	18	10	5	3	26	15	35
NSI	18	9	5	4	33	18	32
KI	18	7	3	8	29	30	24
EB/Streymur	18	6	6	6	33	36	24
GI	18	5	5	8	26	33	20
VB	18	4	4	10	16	30	16
Skala	18	4	0	14	16	39	12
FS Vagar	18	3	2	13	25	45	11

FINLAND

FINLAND – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
HJK Helsinki	26	17	6	3	51	15	57
FC Haka	26	16	5	5	54	16	53
Tampere Utd	26	14	5	7	39	21	47
MyPa	26	13	4	9	46	29	43
Lahti	26	11	8	7	40	31	41
Allianssi	26	10	6	10	43	44	36
Inter Turku	26	10	5	11	43	41	35
Jaro	26	9	8	9	36	38	35
TPS Turku	26	8	8	10	30	35	32
Jokerit	26	7	7	12	29	37	28
Hameenlinna	26	7	7	12	25	48	28
Jazz	26	7	7	12	31	55	28
KooTeePee	26	6	4	16	28	53	22
KuPS	26	4	6	16	25	57	18

FINNISH CUP – Final

Nov 1 - Finnair stadium, Helsinki
HJK Helsinki 2 (Makela 85, Jensen 109)
Allianssi 1 (Paatelainen 78)
***Aet.* HT:** 0-0. **90mins:** 1-1

FRANCE

Friday, October 17

Strasbourg 4 (Martins 22, Niang 38, Ljuboja 44, Ehret 89)
Marseille 1 (Mariet 34) Att: 27,000

Saturday, October 18

Bastia 3 (Saveljic 9, Hadji 26, Nee 49)
Lens 1 (Coridon 48) Att: 5,514

Bordeaux 1 (Darcheville 66)
Toulouse 2 (Faure 16, pen 70) Att: 22,097

Lille 0
Ajaccio 0 Att: 14,298

Lyon 1 (Luyindula 66)
Sochaux 1 (Isabey 63) Att: 37,029

Metz 1 (Thiaw pen 23)
Nantes 3 (Berson 8, Glombard 63, Pujol 74) Att: 19,607

Monaco 1 (Giuly 78)
Auxerre 1 (Kalou 7) Att: 5,000

Montpellier 2 (Rui Pataca 3, 66)
Guingamp 0 Att: 9,874

Paris SG 5 (Pauleta 29, 64, Fiorese 41, 63, Reinaldo 90)
Le Mans 1 (Molefe 13) Att: 42,000

Rennes 0
Nice 0 Att: 14,047

Saturday, October 25

Ajaccio 0
Paris SG 0 Att: 7,000

Auxerre 0
Montpellier 1 (Rouviere 41) Att: 8,000

Guingamp 1 (Sikimic 65)
Toulouse 0 Att: 12,738

Le Mans 1 (Hautcoeur 18)
Bastia 1 (Maurice 19) Att: 11,135

Lens 2 (Utaka 72, Bakari 74)
Lille 1 (Manchev 32) Att: 37,646

Marseille 2 (Van Buyten 45, Drogba 76)
Rennes 0 Att: 49,000

Nantes 0
Lyon 1 (Juninho 67) Att: 33,000

Nice 0
Bordeaux 0 Att: 12,658

Strasbourg 0
Metz 2 (Maoulida 35, 75) Att: 21,269

Sunday, October 26

Sochaux 1 (Frau 68)
Monaco 1 (Morientes 21) Att: 19,232

Saturday, November 1

Bastia 1 (Maurice 45)
Ajaccio 1 (Regragui 74) Att: 6,756

Bordeaux 1 (Darcheville 44)
Marseille 0 Att: 32,507

Lille 1 (Cheyrou 89)
Guingamp 3 (Bourhani 71, 88, Gousse 84) Att: 12,151

Lyon 5 (Juninho 25, 73, Malouda 28, Elber 40, Govou 45)
Nice 0 Att: 34,034

Metz 0
Sochaux 1 (Frau 13) Att: 16,834

Monaco 4 (Morientes 7, Cousin og 23, Squillaci 69, Molefe og 85)
Le Mans 2 (Cousin 10, Peyrelade 12) Att: 5,000

Montpellier 4 (Rui Pataca 3, 20, Assoumani 33, Bamogo 81)
Nantes 1 (Armand 64) Att: 10,641

Rennes 1 (Frei 28)
Strasbourg 1 (Niang 73) Att: 15,007

Toulouse 0
Auxerre 3 (Eduardo og 8, Kalou 25, Violeau 89) Att: 27,529

Sunday, November 2

Paris SG 0
Lens 1 (Moreira 78) Att: 42,000

FRANCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Monaco	12	8	3	1	24	12	27
Lyon	12	7	3	2	23	8	24
Marseille	12	8	0	4	19	10	24
Paris SG	12	6	2	4	16	11	20
Nantes	12	6	1	5	13	11	19
Lens	12	6	1	5	9	15	19
Montpellier	12	5	3	4	17	14	18
Strasbourg	12	5	3	4	17	14	18
Sochaux	12	5	3	4	14	12	18
Bastia	12	5	3	4	16	16	18
Auxerre	12	5	2	5	18	13	17
Nice	12	4	5	3	10	12	17
Bordeaux	12	4	3	5	9	10	15
Metz	12	4	2	6	11	11	14
Rennes	12	3	5	4	9	9	14
Ajaccio	12	3	4	5	11	15	13
Lille	12	3	4	5	11	15	13
Guingamp	12	3	2	7	11	18	11
Toulouse	12	2	3	7	7	19	9
Le Mans	12	0	4	8	5	25	4

LEADING GOALSCORERS
7 Habib Bamogo (Montpellier)
7 Djibril Cisse (Auxerre)
7 Didier Drogba (Marseille)
7 Ludovic Giuly (Monaco)
7 Mamadou Niang (Strasbourg)

GERMANY

Saturday, October 18

Borussia Dortmund 6 (Ewerthon 35, 76, Ricken 42, Kehl 56, Koller 64, 77)
Hannover 2 (Vinicius 58, Wolf 85) Att: 80,500

Hertha 1 (Bobic 47)
Bayer Leverkusen 4 (Franca 11, Berbatov 54, Schneider 72, Babic 85) Att: 36,638

Koln 1 (Dogan 70)
Freiburg 0 Att: 33,000

Monchengladbach 0
Bayern Munich 0 Att: 34,500

1860 Munich 1 (Lauth pen 90)
Eintracht Frankfurt 0 Att: 26,000

Werder Bremen 1 (Haristeas 60)
Stuttgart 3 (Szabics 31, Kuranyi 34, Tiffert 90) Att: 41,000

Wolfsburg 3 (Klimowicz 31, Fernando Baiano 39, 67)
Hansa Rostock 1 (Rydiewicz 41) Att: 19,846

Sunday, October 19

Kaiserslautern 4 (Mettomo 37, Klose 62, 75, Timm 74)
Hamburg 0 Att: 38,061

Schalke 0
Bochum 2 (Fahrenhorst 66, Diabang 79) Att: 60,000

Saturday, October 25

Bayern Munich 4 (Deisler 1, 69, Makaay 27, 80)
Kaiserslautern 1 (Klose 78) Att: 58,000

Eintracht Frankfurt 2 (Frommer 63, Dragusha 80)
Koln 0 Att: 27,500

Freiburg 2 (Iashvili 60, 90)
Werder Bremen 4 (Ailton 14, 28, Micoud 37, Klasnic 65) Att: 25,000

Hamburg 2 (Romeo 29, 68)
Schalke 2 (Matellan 73, Glieder 90) Att: 55,386

Hannover 1 (Idrissou 34)
1860 Munich 1 (Weissenberger 35) Att: 19,754

Hansa Rostock 0
Hertha 1 (Luizao 32) Att: 22,000

Stuttgart 1 (Amanatidis 74)
Wolfsburg 0 Att: 35,000

Sunday, October 26

Bayer Leverkusen 1 (Schneider 49)
Monchengladbach 0 Att: 22,500

Bochum 3 (Hashemian 7, 56, Oliseh 79)
Borussia Dortmund 0 Att: 32,645

Saturday, November 1

Koln 1 (Scherz 37)
Hannover 2 (Brdaric 32, Stendel 80) Att: 33,000

Monchengladbach 1 (Sverkos 30)
Hansa Rostock 1 (Persson 33) Att: 30,100

1860 Munich 3 (Lauth 49, pen 66, 77)
Bochum 1 (Hashemian 34) Att: 18,000

Schalke 2 (Hajto pen 16, Oude Kamphuis 79)
Bayern Munich 0 Att: 61,266

Stuttgart 4 (Kuranyi 33, 65, Tiffert 62, Hleb 64)
Freiburg 1 (Coulibaly pen 45) Att: 54,088

Werder Bremen 3 (Ailton 18, Baumann 24, Klasnic 71)
Eintracht Frankfurt 1 (Chris 66) Att: 34,619

Wolfsburg 3 (D'Alessandro 24, Klimowicz 47, 71)
Hertha 0 Att: 21,325

Sunday, November 2

Borussia Dortmund 3 (Koller 64, pen 66, Ewerthon 69)
Hamburg 2 (Reinhardt 14, Cardoso 60) Att: 78,000

Kaiserslautern 0
Bayer Leverkusen 0 Att: 38,582

GERMANY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Stuttgart	11	8	3	0	17	2	27
B Leverkusen	11	8	2	1	23	7	26
Werder Bremen	11	8	1	2	29	15	25
B Dortmund	11	7	1	3	22	13	22
Bayern Munich	11	6	3	2	25	15	21
Bochum	11	5	3	3	20	13	18
Wolfsburg	11	6	0	5	23	20	18
1860 Munich	11	5	2	4	12	13	17
Hannover	11	4	3	4	20	23	15
Schalke	11	3	5	3	14	16	14
Freiburg	11	3	3	5	15	20	12
Kaiserslautern*	11	4	2	5	13	16	11
Hamburg	11	2	3	6	11	24	9
Eintracht F'furt	11	2	2	7	9	17	8
Hertha	11	1	5	5	8	20	8
Koln	11	2	1	8	9	18	7
M'gladbach	11	1	4	6	7	16	7
Hansa Rostock	11	1	3	7	12	21	6

**3pts deducted for failing to supply accurate information when re-applying for professional licence*

LEADING GOALSCORERS
10 Ailton (Werder Bremen)
8 Diego Klimowicz (Wolfsburg)
7 Vahid Hashemian (Bochum)
7 Martin Max (Hansa Rostock)

GREECE

Oct 18: Aris 1 AEK 2; Aigaleo 2 Panathinaikos 1; Xanthi 2 Akratitos 0; Olympiakos 2 Kallithea 0.
Oct 19: Paniliakos 4 Proodeftiki 1; OFI 0 PAOK 3; Halkidona 3 Ionikos 2; Panionios 2 Iraklis 1.
Oct 25: Akratitos 0 OFI 1; Ionikos 1 Aris 1; Iraklis 1 Halkidona 1.
Oct 26: Panathinaikos 3 Panionios 0; PAOK 2 Kallithea 1; Paniliakos 0 Aigaleo 0; Proodeftiki 1 Xanthi 1; AEK 0 Olympiakos 1.
Nov 1: Halkidona 0 Panathinaikos 0; AEK 3 PAOK 1.
Nov 2: Xanthi 2 Paniliakos 1; Aigaleo 0 Panionios 0; OFI 1 Proodeftiki 0; Aris 0 Iraklis 0; Kallithea 2 Akratitos 2; Olympiakos 2 Ionikos 2.

GREECE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Olympiakos	9	7	1	1	22	5	22
Panathinaikos	9	6	2	1	16	6	20
PAOK	9	5	2	2	15	9	17
Aigaleo	9	5	2	2	9	4	17
AEK	9	4	3	2	16	11	15
Panionios	9	3	5	1	12	11	14
Halkidona	9	3	4	2	12	12	13
OFI	9	4	1	4	10	17	13
Iraklis	9	2	4	3	10	9	10
Paniliakos	9	2	3	4	13	14	9
Aris	9	2	3	4	9	12	9
Xanthi	9	2	3	4	9	12	9
Kallithea	9	1	4	4	14	16	7
Proodeftiki	9	1	4	4	5	12	7
Akratitos	9	1	3	5	7	19	6
Ionikos	9	1	2	6	8	18	5

HOLLAND

Friday, October 17

Ajax 5 (Sonck 5, Van der Vaart 32, 38, Mitea 78, Trabelsi 85)
Volendam 1 (Esajas 13) Att: 49,521

Saturday, October 18

PSV 2 (Robben 40, Kezman 79)
Heerenveen 0 Att: 32,500

RBC 0
Willem II 0 Att: 5,000

RKC 2 (Redan 11, Oost 80)
Vitesse 2 (Rojer 77, 79) Att: 5,100

Sunday, October 19

NEC 0
NAC 3 (Seedorf 5, Elmander 10, Engelaar pen 64) Att: 12,000

Roda JC 1 (Sergio 34)
Feyenoord 1 (Kuijt 3) Att: 13,000

Twente 5 (John 2, 38, 76, N'Kufo 29, Van der Weerden 82)
Groningen 3 (Tuhuteru 42, Pinas 44, Van der Weerden og 89) Att: 13,200

Utrecht 0
AZ 3 (El Khattabi 2, 4, Perez 5) Att: 17,400

Zwolle 1 (Hristov 45)
Den Haag 2 (Hofstede 12, 75) Att: 6,000

Friday, October 24

Volendam 2 (Ouhsaine Ouichou 58, Salden 85)
Roda JC 1 (Senden 18) Att: 4,541

Saturday, October 25

AZ 4 (El Khattabi 3, Perez 37, Huysegems 40, Van Galen 47)
Zwolle 0 Att: 7,982

Den Haag 1 (Cales 19)
NAC 1 (Penders 90) Att: 6,548

Groningen 2 (Smit 86, Drent 88)
Vitesse 1 (Martel 63) Att: 12,500

Heerenveen 1 (Samaras 86)
NEC 2 (De Nooijer 44, Hersi 62) Att: 14,500

RKC 1 (Boutahar 38)
RBC 2 (Lammens 55, Razic 73) Att: 5,000

Sunday, October 26

Feyenoord 2 (Lurling 31, Buffel 90)
Willem II 1 (Quinn 88) Att: 44,000

PSV 2 (Van Bommel 46, De Jong 69)
Ajax 2 (Sonck 57, Ibrahimovic 72) Att: 35,000

Twente 2 (Christensen 76, Ramzi 86)
Utrecht 2 (Van de Haar 37, 71) Att: 13,100

Friday, October 31

Roda JC 5 (Vicelich 17, 43, 87, Sonko 71, Kone 82)
Den Haag 1 (Cales 20) Att: 13,860

Saturday, November 1

Ajax 3 (Ibrahimovic 21, De Jong 77, Galasek pen 90)
AZ 2 (Perez 5, 23) Att: 50,222

NAC 1 (Engelaar pen 90)
PSV 3 (Lucius 4, Park 32, 40) Att: 14,479

RBC 1 (Hesp pen 55)
NEC 0 Att: 5,000

Vitesse 2 (Claessens 57, Mbamba 70)
Volendam 2 (Faria 27, Tuyp 29) Att: 17,500

Sunday, November 2

Groningen 3 (Drent 53, Hugo 77, Van Gessel 89)
Feyenoord 3 (Lurling 5, Kuijt 35, Paauwe 45) Att: 16,000

Utrecht 2 (Tanghe 52, Van den Brink 70)
Heerenveen 1 (Knopper 87) Att: 17,500

Willem II 4 (Caluwe 28, Quinn pen 31, Denneboom 72, Van den Eede 90)
RKC 1 (Greene 27) Att: 12,800

Zwolle 1 (Takak 53)
Twente 0 Att: 6,500

HOLLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ajax	10	8	1	1	29	12	25
PSV	10	7	2	1	26	9	23
AZ	10	7	1	2	22	8	22
Feyenoord	10	5	3	2	18	13	18
RBC	10	4	3	3	10	10	15
Heerenveen	10	5	0	5	10	11	15
Roda JC	10	3	5	2	15	10	14
Willem II	10	4	2	4	12	19	14
RKC	10	4	1	5	15	15	13
Twente	10	4	1	5	18	21	13
Groningen	10	3	3	4	13	17	12
Utrecht	10	3	3	4	11	15	12
NEC	10	4	0	6	11	17	12
NAC	10	3	2	5	14	14	11
Volendam	10	2	4	4	14	19	10
Den Haag	10	2	3	5	9	19	9
Vitesse	10	1	4	5	15	20	7
Zwolle	10	1	2	7	5	18	5

LEADING GOALSCORERS
9 Mateja Kezman (PSV)
7 Ali El Khattabi (AZ)
6 Zlatan Ibrahimovic (Ajax)
6 Collins John (Twente)
6 Iwan Redan (RKC)

HUNGARY

Oct 19: Gyor 0 Ferencvaros 1; Bekescsaba 0 Ujpest 1; MTK 2 Debrecen 0; Videoton 2 Matav 0; Siofok 0 Zalaegerszeg 1; Haladas 0 Pecs 0.
Oct 25: Ferencvaros 2 Haladas 0; Pecs 0 Siofok 2; Zalaegerszeg 1 Videoton 1; Debrecen 1 Gyor 0; Ujpest 1 MTK 1.
Oct 31: Debrecen 3 Ujpest 3.
Nov 1: Zalaegerszeg 2 Bekescsaba 1; Pecs 3 Videoton 1; Ferencvaros 0 Siofok 1; Gyor 6 Haladas 0.
Nov 2: Matav 2 MTK 1.

HUNGARY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
MTK	12	6	3	3	20	12	21
Debrecen	12	6	2	4	20	12	20
Siofok	12	6	2	4	12	7	20
Videoton	12	5	5	2	18	15	20
Pecs	12	5	3	4	13	13	18
Matav	11	5	2	4	15	13	17
Ferencvaros*	12	6	4	2	16	12	16
Ujpest	12	3	6	3	14	13	15
Gyor	12	4	2	6	14	15	14
Haladas	12	2	5	5	8	20	11
Zalaegerszeg	12	3	1	8	15	24	10
Bekescsaba	11	1	3	7	9	18	6

*6pts deducted because of a pitch invasion by Ferencvaros supporters during a game last season

ICELAND

ICELAND – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
KR	18	10	3	5	28	27	33
FH	18	9	3	6	36	24	30
IA	18	8	6	4	27	21	30
Fylkir	18	9	2	7	29	24	29
IBV	18	7	3	8	25	25	24
Grindavik	18	7	2	9	24	31	23
Fram	18	7	2	9	22	30	23
KA	18	6	4	8	29	27	22
Throttur	18	7	1	10	27	29	22
Valur	18	6	2	10	24	33	20

ICELANDIC CUP – Final

Sep 27 - Laugardalsvollur stadium, Reykjavik
IA 1 (Gunnlaugsson 80)
FH 0
HT: 0-0

ITALY

Saturday, October 18

Ancona 2 (Viali 57, Ganz 90)
Juventus 3 (Miccoli 29, 49, Zambrotta 44) Att: 23,306

Brescia 2 (Baggio 22, Caracciolo 49)
Inter 2 (Cruz 62, Vieri pen 87) Att: 20,870

Sunday, October 19

Bologna 2 (Dalla Bona 71, Rossini 78)
Perugia 2 (Rossini og 49, Bothroyd 69) Att: 17,961

Chievo 1 (Amauri 14)
Sampdoria 1 (Diana 60) Att: 13,890

Milan 1 (Pirlo 37)
Lazio 0 Att: 62,122

Modena 2 (Vignaroli 64, Kamara 90)
Lecce 0 Att: 15,901

Reggina 2 (Mozart 2, Leon 90)
Siena 1 (Flo 90) Att: 20,190

Roma 2 (Samuel 29, Cassano 59)
Parma 0 Att: 54,531

Udinese 2 (Sensini 31, Iaquinta 34)
Empoli 0 Att: 10,731

Saturday, October 25

Empoli 0
Chievo 1 (Amauri 59) Att: 3,882

Siena 2 (Taddei 11, Chiesa 75)
Lecce 1 (Chevanton 9) Att: 10,409

Sunday, October 26

Inter 0
Roma 0 Att: 68,641

Juventus 2 (Nedved 5, Trezeguet 45)
Brescia 0 Att: 32,360

Lazio 2 (Inzaghi 82, Corradi 90)
Bologna 1 (Dabo og 87) Att: 45,338

Parma 3 (Morfeo 27, Adriano 85, Marchionni 87)
Modena 0 Att: 16,938

Perugia 3 (Di Loreto 41, Bothroyd 43, Margiotta 88)
Udinese 3 (Fava 35, 61, 76) Att: 7,072

Reggina 0
Ancona 0 Att: 20,686

Sampdoria 0
Milan 3 (Tomasson 38, Shevchenko 59, 90) Att: 34,424

Saturday, November 1

Milan 1 (Tomasson 64)
Juventus 1 (Di Vaio 83) Att: 77,900

Udinese 1 (Iaquinta 27)
Lazio 2 (Corradi 17, Inzaghi 34) Att: 16,000

Sunday, November 2

Ancona 0
Siena 0 Att: 20,014

Bologna 0
Sampdoria 1 (Doni 33) Att: 22,722

Brescia 2 (Matuzalem 4, Di Biagio 38)
Parma 3 (Morfeo 12, Marchionni 43, Gilardino 70) Att: 18,094

Chievo 0
Inter 2 (Vieri 64, Recoba 68) Att: 25,053

Lecce 2 (Chevanton 2, 43)
Empoli 1 (Rocchi 60) Att: 9,452

Modena 1 (Allegretti 50)
Perugia 0 Att: 13,685

Roma 2 (Montella 18, Carew 81)
Reggina 0 Att: 52,050

ITALY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Milan	8	6	2	0	16	4	20
Juventus	8	6	2	0	19	8	20
Roma	8	5	3	0	16	3	18
Parma	8	5	2	1	16	9	17
Lazio	8	5	1	2	15	10	16
Inter	8	3	4	1	8	5	13
Modena	8	4	1	3	9	7	13
Udinese	8	3	2	3	11	9	11
Chievo	8	3	2	3	10	9	11
Siena	8	2	4	2	10	7	10
Sampdoria	8	2	3	3	7	10	9
Reggina	8	1	5	2	9	12	8
Brescia	8	1	3	4	14	20	6
Lecce	8	2	0	6	9	19	6
Bologna	8	1	2	5	9	13	5
Perugia	8	0	5	3	9	16	5
Ancona	8	0	3	5	4	15	3
Empoli	8	0	2	6	5	20	2

LEADING GOALSCORERS
8 Andrii Shevchenko (Milan)
7 Adriano (Parma)
5 Andrea Caracciolo (Brescia)
5 Marco Di Vaio (Juventus)
5 Dino Fava (Udinese)
5 David Trezeguet (Juventus)

LATVIA

LATVIAN CUP – Final

Sep 28 - Skonto stadium, Riga
Skonto Riga 0
Ventspils 4 (Agafonovs 10, Smirnovs 22, Rimkus 43, Stukalins pen 55)
HT: 0-3. **Att:** 4,500. **Ref:** Osipovs
Sent off: Lobanovs (Skonto) 58min; Heiduseks (Ventspils) 90min

LITHUANIA

LITHUANIA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FBK Kaunas	28	21	5	2	64	20	68
Ekranas	28	18	8	2	50	19	62
Vetra	28	13	8	7	42	22	47
Zalgiris Vilnius	28	9	7	12	37	37	34
Atlantas	28	9	6	13	27	30	33
Suduva	28	8	8	12	39	45	32
Sviesa	28	7	5	16	25	38	26
Sakalas	28	1	5	22	13	86	8

Inkaras withdrew

NORWAY

Oct 18: Aalesund 1 Molde 1.
Oct 19: Sogndal 2 Lillestrom 1; Viking 1 Bodo/Glimt 2; Brann 3 Bryne 0; Odd Grenland 1 Lyn 1; Rosenborg 1 Stabaek 6.
Oct 20: Valerenga 3 Tromso 0.
Oct 26: Tromso 0 Brann 1; Bryne 2 Rosenborg 4; Stabaek 3 Aalesund 1; Lillestrom 3 Odd Grenland 0; Bodo/Glimt 3 Sogndal 0; Valerenga 0 Lyn 1.
Oct 27: Molde 1 Viking 2.
Nov 1: Odd Grenland 2 Bodo/Glimt 4; Sogndal 2 Molde 3; Viking 3 Stabaek 1; Aalesund 2 Bryne 0; Rosenborg 0 Tromso 1; Brann 3 Valerenga 1; Lyn 0 Lillestrom 3.

NORWAY – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rosenborg	26	19	4	3	68	28	61
Bodo/Glimt	26	14	5	7	45	30	47
Stabaek	26	11	9	6	51	35	42
Odd Grenland	26	11	5	10	46	43	38
Viking	26	9	10	7	46	34	37
Brann	26	10	7	9	45	47	37
Lillestrom	26	10	7	9	33	35	37
Sogndal	26	9	8	9	43	46	35
Molde	26	9	4	13	32	41	31
Lyn	26	8	6	12	34	45	30
Tromso	26	8	5	13	30	52	29
Valerenga	26	6	10	10	30	33	28
Aalesund	26	7	7	12	30	43	28
Bryne	26	7	1	18	35	56	22

POLAND

Oct 17: Lech 5 Gornik L 1.
Oct 18: Gornik P 3 Odra 3; Gornik Z 3 Widzew 3; Amica 1 Groclin 0; Wisla P 2 Legia 1.
Oct 19: Wisla K 5 Katowice 0.
Oct 24: Odra 3 Wisla K 2.
Oct 25: Groclin 2 Wisla P 2; Widzew 2 Amica 2; Gornik L 1 Gornik P 0; Polonia 1 Lech 1; Katowice 0 Gornik Z 0.
Oct 26: Swit 1 Legia 3.
Oct 29: Gornik Z 3 Odra 1; Legia 1 Groclin 1; Lech 5 Swit 1; Gornik P 0 Polonia 0; Amica 4 Katowice 0; Wisla P 3 Widzew 1.
Oct 30: Wisla K 4 Gornik L 0.
Nov 4: Polonia 1 Odra 0.

POLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Amica	11	8	1	2	19	9	25
Wisla K	11	8	0	3	29	13	24
Gornik L	11	7	1	3	14	14	22
Legia	11	5	5	1	18	10	20
Wisla P	11	5	2	4	19	19	17
Groclin	11	4	4	3	22	12	16
Odra	11	4	3	4	15	18	15
Katowice	11	4	3	4	9	20	15
Gornik Z	11	3	5	3	13	13	14
Lech	11	3	2	6	20	17	11
Widzew	11	2	4	5	16	21	10
Polonia	10	1	5	4	7	11	8
Gornik P	11	1	3	7	7	18	6
Swit	10	0	4	6	7	20	4

PORTUGAL

Friday, October 17

Guimaraes 3 (Hugo Cunha 4, Bruno Alves 35, Fangueiro pen 90)
Moreirense 0

Saturday, October 18

Academica 0
Nacional 1 (Adriano 76)

Belenenses 1 (Brandao 4)
FC Porto 4 (Derlei 18, Deco 33, Cesar Peixoto 46, Marco Ferreira 53)

Pacos Ferreira 0
Boavista 3 (Ricardo Sousa 31, Pedro Santos 34, Fary pen 36)

Sunday, October 19

Benfica 2 (Sokota 28, Simao 64)
Gil Vicente 1 (Ferreira 31)

Estrela Amadora 0
Alverca 3 (Ze Roberto 3, Rodolfo Lima 89, 90)

Sporting Braga 1 (Wender pen 22)
Rio Ave 1 (Jaime 63)

Uniao Leiria 2 (Paulo Gomes 23, Douala 33)
Maritimo 2 (Eric Gaucho 18, Van der Gaag 84)

Monday, October 20

Sporting Lisbon 3 (Liedson 10, 73, Joao Pinto 45)
Beira Mar 1 (Sandro 26)

Friday, October 24

Pacos Ferreira 0
Sporting Braga 1 (Wender 60)

Saturday, October 25

Gil Vicente 1 (Casquilha 40)
Guimaraes 1 (Guga 14)

Sunday, October 26

Alverca 1 (Torrao 8)
Sporting Lisbon 2 (Rochemback pen 29, Liedson 53)

Beira Mar 4 (Kingsley 32, Sandro 66, Juninho Petrolina 81, Rui Dolores 90)
Uniao Leiria 2 (Douala 27, Ludemar 85)

Moreirense 1 (Manoel 62)
Academica 1 (Marcelo 90)

Nacional 4 (Joao Fidalgo 41, Adriano 64, Serginho 69, 70)
Belenenses 0

Rio Ave 3 (Junas 44, Jaime 48, Evandro 77)
Estrela Amadora 1 (Julio Cesar 13)

Monday, October 27

Boavista 0
FC Porto 1 (Alenichev 77)

Wednesday, October 29

Academica 1 (Argel og 6)
Benfica 3 (Sokota 21, Simao 27, Roger 82)

Friday, October 31

FC Porto 1 (Ricardo Carvalho 53)
Nacional 0

Saturday, November 1

Estrela Amadora 0
Pacos Ferreira 1 (Renato Queiros 34)

Guimaraes 1 (Djurdjevic 31)
Maritimo 1 (Alan 48)

Sporting Lisbon 1 (Silva 86)
Rio Ave 1 (Evandro 45)

Sunday, November 2

Academica 2 (Delmer 52, 89)
Gil Vicente 1 (Paulo Alves pen 90)

Belenenses 0
Moreirense 0

Benfica 1 (Simao 41)
Beira Mar 2 (Sandro 52, Wijnhard 63)

Uniao Leiria 2 (Gabriel 5, Paulo Gomes 30)
Alverca 1 (Zeferino 46)

Monday, November 3

Sporting Braga 0
Boavista 0

PORTUGAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FC Porto	10	9	1	0	24	6	28
Beira Mar	10	6	1	3	18	11	19
Sporting Lisbon	10	6	1	3	17	13	19
Maritimo	9	5	3	1	10	6	18
Sporting Braga	10	5	3	2	10	8	18
Benfica	9	5	2	2	16	10	17
Boavista	10	4	5	1	10	4	17
Nacional	10	5	0	5	15	9	15
Alverca	10	4	1	5	12	9	13
Belenenses	10	3	4	3	15	17	13
Gil Vicente	10	3	2	5	14	11	11
Academica	10	3	2	5	10	14	11
Uniao Leiria	10	3	2	5	12	17	11
Moreirense	10	3	2	5	7	14	11
Rio Ave	10	2	4	4	10	11	10
Guimaraes	10	2	2	6	10	15	8
Pacos Ferreira	10	2	0	8	4	18	6
Estrela Amadora	10	1	1	8	5	26	4

LEADING GOALSCORERS
9 Derlei (FC Porto)
6 Adriano (Nacional)

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

FAI CUP – Final

Oct 26 - Lansdowne Road, Dublin
Longford Town 2 (Francis 32, Barrett 90)
St Patrick's Athletic 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Kelly
Sent off: Fahey (St Patrick's)

ROMANIA

Oct 17: U Craiova 0 Poli AEK 0; Bacau 0 Apulum 1.
Oct 18: Gloria 2 Rapid 2; National 1 Arges 1.
Oct 19: Brasov 3 Dinamo 4; Farul 2 Petrolul 0; Otelul 1 Ceahlaul 1.
Oct 25: Poli AEK 0 Farul 0; Apulum 2 U Craiova 2; Arges 0 Otelul 0; Petrolul 5 Brasov 0; Steaua 4 Gloria 1.
Oct 26: Ceahlaul 1 Bacau 0; Oradea 0 National 0; Dinamo 3 Rapid 4.
Oct 31: Gloria 1 Dinamo 1.
Nov 1: Brasov 0 Poli AEK 3; U Craiova 2 Ceahlaul 0; Bacau 2 Arges 1; Otelul 1 Oradea 0; National 0 Steaua 1.
Nov 2: Rapid 2 Petrolul 0; Farul 3 Apulum 0.

ROMANIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Steaua	10	6	4	0	16	3	22
Rapid	11	6	4	1	20	11	22
Dinamo	11	6	2	3	25	17	20
Apulum	11	5	3	3	12	17	18
Otelul	11	4	4	3	11	9	16
Gloria	11	4	3	4	16	19	15
U Craiova	11	3	5	3	12	12	14
Arges	11	3	4	4	15	13	13
Farul	11	3	4	4	16	15	13
Poli AEK	11	2	7	2	8	9	13
Bacau	11	3	4	4	16	22	13
National	11	3	3	5	13	17	12
Ceahlaul	11	3	2	6	13	18	11
Brasov	11	3	2	6	17	24	11
Petrolul	11	2	4	5	12	14	10
Oradea	10	2	3	5	10	12	9

RUSSIA

Oct 16: Lokomotiv 6 Shinnik 1.
Oct 18: Rostov 1 Zenit 1; Saturn 2 Uralan 1; Rubin 3 Kryliya Sovetov 1; Dinamo 0 Torpedo-Metallurg 1; Rotor 2 Spartak-Alaniya 1.
Oct 19: Chernomorets 2 Torpedo Moscow 4.
Oct 20: Moscow Spartak 0 CSKA 0.
Oct 25: CSKA 3 Rotor 0; Torpedo-Metallurg 1 Rubin 2; Spartak-Alaniya 3 Moscow Spartak 0; Kryliya Sovetov 1 Dinamo 0; Torpedo Moscow 4 Saturn 3; Uralan 1 Chernomorets 0; Zenit 0 Lokomotiv 0; Shinnik 4 Rostov 1.
Nov 1: Lokomotiv 6 Uralan 0; Chernomorets 2 Shinnik 1; Rostov 0 Torpedo Moscow 0; Saturn 1 Zenit 3; Moscow Spartak 0 Torpedo-Metallurg 2; Rubin 3 CSKA 2; Rotor 1 Kryliya Sovetov 0; Dinamo 0 Spartak-Alaniya 0.

RUSSIA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
CSKA	30	17	8	5	56	32	59
Zenit	30	16	8	6	48	32	56
Rubin	30	15	8	7	44	29	53
Lokomotiv	30	15	7	8	54	33	52
Shinnik	30	12	11	7	43	34	47
Dinamo	30	12	10	8	42	29	46
Saturn	30	12	9	9	40	37	45
Torpedo Moscow	30	11	10	9	42	38	43
Kryliya Sovetov	30	11	9	10	38	33	42
Moscow Spartak	30	10	6	14	38	48	36
Rostov	30	8	10	12	30	42	34
Rotor	30	9	5	16	33	44	32
Spartak-Alaniya	30	9	4	17	23	43	31
Torpedo-Metallurg	30	8	5	17	25	39	29
Uralan	30	6	10	14	23	47	28
Chernomorets	30	6	6	18	30	49	24

SCOTLAND

Saturday, October 18

Aberdeen 0
Dundee Utd 1 (McLaren 11) Att: 11,244

Celtic 5 (Miller 9, 50, Stamp og 12, Larsson 36, Varga 42)
Hearts 0 Att: 59,560

Dundee 1 (Novo 53)
Partick 0 Att: 6,497

Dunfermline 2 (Crawford 28, 55)
Kilmarnock 3 (McSwegan 24, 84, Shields 69) Att: 4,495

Hibernian 0
Livingston 2 (Lilley 38, 83) Att: 8,562

Sunday, October 19

Motherwell 1 (Pearson 25)
Rangers 1 (Arveladze 15) Att: 10,824

Saturday, October 25

Celtic 4 (Larsson 4, 28, 55, Sutton pen 45)
Aberdeen 0 Att: 59,598

Hibernian 3 (Murdock 13, Riordan 16, O'Connor 90)
Kilmarnock 1 (Nish 80) Att: 7,191

Livingston 0
Rangers 0 Att: 9,627

Partick 1 (Waddell 63)
Hearts 4 (Kirk 13, 30, De Vries 27, Simmons 74) Att: 4,814

Sunday, October 26

Dundee Utd 1 (McIntyre 56)
Dundee 1 (Novo pen 20) Att: 12,292

Saturday, November 1

Aberdeen 0
Motherwell 3 (Craig 10, Pearson 77, Lasley 90) Att: 9,895

Dundee 1 (Novo 33)
Hibernian 1 (Riordan 81) Att: 7,032

Dunfermline 2 (Scott M Thomson 59, Mehmet 90)
Dundee Utd 0 Att: 5,078

Hearts 3 (De Vries 67, Kirk 85, Pressley pen 90)
Livingston 1 (Lilley 52) Att: 11,233

Kilmarnock 0
Celtic 5 (Sutton pen 21, 76, pen 90, Hartson 70, Maloney 84) Att: 12,640

Rangers 3 (Arteta 8, pen 77, Mols 40)
Partick 1 (Grady 82) Att: 49,551

SCOTLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Celtic	11	10	1	0	33	3	31
Rangers	11	8	2	1	30	9	26
Hearts	11	6	2	3	18	15	20
Dundee	11	4	4	3	14	12	16
Motherwell	10	4	3	3	13	12	15
Dunfermline	10	4	3	3	10	10	15
Hibernian	11	4	3	4	12	15	15
Livingston	11	3	4	4	11	13	13
Kilmarnock	11	3	2	6	12	25	11
Dundee Utd	11	2	3	6	7	19	9
Aberdeen	11	2	1	8	9	23	7
Partick	11	0	2	9	9	22	2

LEADING GOALSCORERS
10 Henrik Larsson (Celtic)
9 Nacho Novo (Dundee)

SERBIA & MONTENEGRO

Oct 17: Partizan 1 Napredak 0.
Oct 18: Buducnost 3 Radnicki 0 0; Kom Podgorica 0 Zemun 1; Sutjeska 1 Vojvodina 0; Borac 1 Zeta 1; Obilic 0 Hajduk K 2.
Oct 19: Zeleznik 0 Red Star 2; OFK 2 Sartid 4.
Oct 25: Radnicki 0 1 Zeleznik 2; Napredak 1 OFK 1; Zemun 1 Buducnost 2; Zeta 0 Obilic 1; Red Star 5 Borac 1; Sartid 3 Sutjeska 2.
Oct 26: Hajduk K 0 Partizan 0; Vojvodina 4 Kom Podgorica 2.
Oct 31: Partizan 3 Zeta 0.
Nov 1: Borac 2 Radnicki 0 2; Kom Podgorica 1 Buducnost 4; Sutjeska 2 Napredak 1; Zeleznik 4 Zemun 2; OFK 1 Hajduk K 0.
Nov 2: Vojvodina 2 Sartid 2; Obilic 1 Red Star 3.

SERBIA & MONTENEGRO

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Red Star	10	8	1	1	24	5	25
Partizan	10	7	1	2	24	10	22
Sartid	10	7	1	2	23	15	22
OFK	10	6	2	2	15	11	20
Zeleznik	10	6	1	3	16	8	19
Buducnost	10	6	0	4	18	17	18
Hajduk K	10	4	2	4	9	7	14
Obilic	10	4	1	5	13	14	13
Sutjeska	10	4	1	5	13	14	13
Zemun	10	3	3	4	9	9	12
Vojvodina	10	2	4	4	9	13	10
Napredak	10	2	3	5	8	13	9
Zeta	10	2	3	5	10	16	9
Radnicki O	10	1	4	5	7	16	7
Borac	10	1	3	6	9	24	6
Kom Podgorica	10	2	0	8	9	24	6

SPAIN

Saturday, October 18

Albacete 3 (Delporte 66, David Sanchez 75, Aranda 80)
Real Sociedad 1 (Nihat 71) Att: 15,000

Barcelona 0
Deportivo La Coruna 2 (Luque 40, Sergio 70) Att: 68,222

Celta Vigo 0
Real Madrid 2 (Ronaldo 24, Roberto Carlos 65) Att: 25,000

Sunday, October 19

Athletic Bilbao 2 (Urzaiz 50, Etxeberria 81)
Villarreal 0 Att: 30,000

Atletico Madrid 2 (Fernando Torres 26, Jorge 90)
Mallorca 1 (Eto'o 38) Att: 35,000

Osasuna 2 (Bakayoko 10, 83)
Murcia 1 (Luis Garcia 18) Att: 14,000

Racing Santander 4 (Moran 55, Benayoun 58, Jonathan 68, Bodipo 81)
Malaga 2 (Salva 19, Leko 89) Att: 12,663

Sevilla 2 (Reyes 49, Antonio 81)
Betis 2 (Denilson 51, Tote 60) Att: 40,000

Valencia 4 (Mista 7, 45, Baraja 44, Vicente 78)
Espanyol 0 Att: 45,000

Zaragoza 1 (Savio 15)
Valladolid 0 Att: 32,000

Saturday, October 25

Deportivo La Coruna 2 (Valeron 15, Diego Tristan 80)
Valencia 1 (Mista 73) Att: 28,000

Malaga 2 (Litos 28, Salva pen 45)
Zaragoza 1 (Villa 88) Att: 20,000

Real Madrid 3 (Zidane 27, Raul 78, 90)
Racing Santander 1 (Benayoun 15) Att: 65,000

Sunday, October 26

Betis 3 (Tote 43, Fernando pen 45, Capi 50)
Albacete 2 (Mikel 12, Parri 66) Att: 33,000

Espanyol 0
Celta Vigo 4 (Luccin pen 16, Milosevic 59, Mostovoi 77, Jandro 89) Att: 13,600

Mallorca 1 (Correa 86)
Barcelona 3 (Saviola 9, Ronaldinho 23, Cocu 51) Att: 21,500

Murcia 1 (Karanka 71)
Atletico Madrid 3 (Fernando Torres pen 14, 84, Nikolaidis 38) Att: 15,000

Real Sociedad 1 (Kovacevic 76)
Osasuna 0 Att: 21,600

Valladolid 2 (Chema 16, Makukula 53)
Athletic Bilbao 0 Att: 13,000

Villarreal 3 (Anderson 10, 68, Arruabarrena 89)
Sevilla 3 (Javi Casquero 3, Reyes pen 23, Carlos 83) Att: 13,000

Tuesday, October 28

Zaragoza 0
Real Madrid 0 Att: 35,000

Wednesday, October 29

Albacete 2 (Parri 68, Basti 72)
Villarreal 0 Att: 15,000

Athletic Bilbao 2 (Urzaiz 62, Tiko 73)
Malaga 1 (Diego Alonso 3) Att: 20,000

Barcelona 3 (Saviola 39, Xavi 57, Ronaldinho 66)
Murcia 0 Att: 57,252

Deportivo La Coruna 0
Mallorca 2 (Eto'o pen 75, Bruggink 88) Att: 20,000

Osasuna 2 (Moha 51, Inaki Munoz 82)
Betis 0 Att: 14,210

Racing Santander 0
Espanyol 1 (Oscar 84) Att: 10,141

Sevilla 1 (Dario Silva 16)
Valladolid 1 (Makukula 51) Att: 35,000

Valencia 2 (Aimar 41, Canobbio 67)
Celta Vigo 2 (Berizzo 56, Jesuli 65) Att: 45,000

Thursday, October 30

Atletico Madrid 4 (Nikolaidis 19, Fernando Torres pen 56, 65, Simeone 80)
Real Sociedad 0 Att: 30,000

Saturday, November 1

Celta Vigo 0
Racing Santander 1 (Benayoun 2) Att: 18,000

Murcia 0
Deportivo La Coruna 0 Att: 12,000

Real Madrid 3 (Ronaldo 35, 55, Figo 70)
Athletic Bilbao 0 Att: 68,000

Sunday, November 2

Betis 1 (Marcos Assuncao 20)
Atletico Madrid 2 (Fernando Torres 40, pen 50) Att: 35,000

Espanyol 0
Zaragoza 2 (Galletti 11, Alvaro 23) Att: 20,350

Malaga 2 (Duda 1, Salva pen 22)
Sevilla 0 Att: 21,000

Mallorca 0
Valencia 5 (Jorge Lopez pen 2, Ricardo Oliveira 7, 45, 77, Xisco 89) Att: 20,000

Real Sociedad 3 (Jauregi 58, De Pedro pen 60, Karpin 75)
Barcelona 3 (Motta 33, Overmars 71, Gabri 80) Att: 30,000

Valladolid 2 (Makukula 34, Losada pen 90)
Albacete 0 Att: 11,000

Villarreal 1 (Guayre 23)
Osasuna 0 Att: 17,000

SPAIN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Valencia	10	7	2	1	21	5	23
Real Madrid	10	7	2	1	23	9	23
Dep La Coruna	10	7	1	2	19	8	22
Osasuna	10	5	2	3	12	8	17
Barcelona	10	4	4	2	14	10	16
Atletico Madrid	10	5	1	4	13	13	16
Racing Santander	10	4	2	4	13	11	14
Athletic Bilbao	10	4	2	4	12	12	14
Villarreal	10	3	5	2	11	11	14
Valladolid	10	4	2	4	14	18	14
Betis	10	3	4	3	13	13	13
Malaga	10	4	1	5	12	14	13
Real Sociedad	10	3	4	3	12	14	13
Sevilla	10	2	6	2	12	13	12
Zaragoza	10	3	2	5	8	10	11
Celta Vigo	10	2	4	4	13	14	10
Albacete	10	3	0	7	10	15	9
Mallorca	10	2	2	6	9	20	8
Murcia	10	1	4	5	7	16	7
Espanyol	10	1	2	7	8	22	5

LEADING GOALSCORERS
8 Ronaldo (Real Madrid)
7 Fernando Torres (Atletico Madrid)
6 Mista (Valencia)
6 Walter Pandiani (Deportivo La Coruna)

SWEDEN

Oct 19: AIK 2 Sundsvall 1; Halmstads 2 Djurgardens 3; Malmo 1 IFK Gothenburg 3.
Oct 20: Hammarby 1 Orebro 1; Landskrona 3 Enkopings 1; Orgryte 1 Elfsborg 0; Osters 3 Helsingborgs 3.
Oct 26: Djurgardens 5 Osters 2; Enkopings 0 AIK 2; Sundsvall 2 Halmstads 1; Helsingborgs 1 Orgryte 2; Elfsborg 0 Hammarby 2; IFK Gothenburg 1 Landskrona 1; Orebro 1 Malmo 0.

SWEDEN – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Djurgardens	26	19	1	6	62	26	58
Hammarby	26	15	6	5	50	30	51
Malmo	26	14	6	6	50	23	48
Orgryte	26	14	3	9	42	40	45
AIK	26	11	6	9	39	34	39
Helsingborgs	26	11	5	10	35	36	38
IFK Gothenburg	26	10	7	9	37	28	37
Orebro	26	10	7	9	29	33	37
Halmstads	26	11	3	12	41	37	36
Elfsborg	26	9	7	10	29	34	34
Landskrona	26	8	8	10	26	39	32
Sundsvall	26	3	10	13	25	43	19
Osters	26	3	8	15	31	56	17
Enkopings	26	3	5	18	22	59	14

SWITZERLAND

Oct 15: Zurich 0 Young Boys 2.
Oct 26: Aarau 2 Basle 2; Servette 3 Grasshopper 1; Thun 1 St Gallen 1; Wil 1900 0 Young Boys 1; Zurich 3 Neuchatel Xamax 1.
Oct 29: Basle 2 Thun 0; St Gallen 1 Servette 0; Neuchatel Xamax 0 Wil 1900 0; Young Boys 5 Aarau 3; Zurich 0 Grasshopper 2.
Nov 2: Servette 1 Basle 2; Aarau 1 Neuchatel Xamax 1; Grasshopper 5 St Gallen 2; Thun 1 Young Boys 3; Wil 1900 2 Zurich 1.

SWITZERLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Basle	16	15	1	0	49	13	46
Young Boys	16	11	1	4	33	22	34
Servette	16	8	4	4	32	26	28
Aarau	16	5	6	5	26	27	21
St Gallen	16	5	5	6	23	28	20
Grasshopper	16	6	1	9	27	33	19
Neuchatel X	16	4	4	8	19	25	16
Thun	16	3	6	7	17	32	15
Wil 1900	16	3	4	9	20	34	13
Zurich	16	3	2	11	21	27	11

TURKEY

Oct 17: Rizespor 0 Galatasaray 1.
Oct 18: Besiktas 1 Diyarbakirspor 0; Adanaspor 1 Konyaspor 1; Ankaragucu 1 Elazigspor 0.
Oct 19: Sebatspor 0 Genclerbirligi 3; Malatyaspor 2 Istanbulspor 1; Samsunspor 1 Gaziantepspor 2; Denizlispor 0 Trabzonspor 1; Bursaspor 2 Fenerbahce 2.
Oct 24: Fenerbahce 3 Adanaspor 0.
Oct 25: Elazigspor 2 Denizlispor 4; Diyarbakirspor 1 Ankaragucu 1; Trabzonspor 0 Malatyaspor 0; Galatasaray 1 Samsunspor 0.
Oct 26: Istanbulspor 3 Bursaspor 0; Genclerbirligi 1 Rizespor 0; Gaziantepspor 0 Besiktas 3; Konyaspor 0 Sebatspor 0.
Oct 31: Besiktas 0 Galatasaray 0.
Nov 1: Denizlispor 1 Diyarbakirspor 2; Samsunspor 2 Genclerbirligi 1; Istanbulspor 0 Trabzonspor 2; Ankaragucu 1 Gaziantepspor 4.
Nov 2: Malatyaspor 3 Elazigspor 0; Bursaspor 6 Adanaspor 0; Rizespor 1 Konyaspor 1; Sebatspor 1 Fenerbahce 1.

TURKEY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Besiktas	11	9	2	0	28	6	29
Fenerbahce	11	7	3	1	26	13	24
Galatasaray	11	7	3	1	18	11	24
Trabzonspor	11	7	2	2	17	11	23
Malatyaspor	11	7	1	3	19	9	22
Gaziantepspor	11	6	1	4	16	13	19
Denizlispor	11	5	2	4	20	12	17
Istanbulspor	11	5	2	4	19	14	17
Genclerbirligi	11	5	1	5	21	11	16
Ankaragucu	11	4	2	5	13	18	14
Rizespor	11	3	3	5	9	16	12
Diyarbakirspor	11	3	2	6	14	18	11
Konyaspor	11	2	5	4	13	19	11
Samsunspor	11	3	2	6	16	24	11
Bursaspor	11	2	4	5	13	17	10
Adanaspor	11	2	1	8	7	26	7
Sebatspor	11	1	2	8	11	22	5
Elazigspor	11	1	2	8	12	32	5

UKRAINE

Oct 17: Dynamo 2 Illichivets 0.
Oct 18: Metalurh Z 2 Chornomorets 2; Borysfen 1 Volyn 0; Karpaty 1 Tavriya 0; Zirka 0 Vorskla 1.
Oct 19: Dnipro 0 Arsenal 0; Obolon 2 Metalurh D 1; Shakhtar 0 Kryvbas 0.
Oct 25: Illichivets 0 Shakhtar 2; Metalurh D 0 Dynamo 3; Vorskla 0 Obolon 2; Tavriya 2 Zirka 0; Chornomorets 1 Borysfen 0; Arsenal 2 Metalurh Z 1; Kryvbas 1 Dnipro 2; Volyn 1 Karpaty 0.
Nov 1: Dynamo 2 Vorskla 1.
Nov 2: Metalurh Z 1 Kryvbas 0; Borysfen 0 Arsenal 2; Karpaty 1 Chornomorets 1; Zirka 1 Volyn 0; Shakhtar 1 Dnipro 1; Illichivets 2 Metalurh D 2.
Nov 3: Obolon 1 Tavriya 0.

UKRAINE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Shakhtar	14	11	3	0	30	9	36
Dynamo	14	11	2	1	34	10	35
Dnipro	14	9	2	3	27	12	29
Metalurh D	14	7	5	2	24	15	26
Chornomorets	14	5	7	2	19	17	22
Arsenal	14	6	3	5	18	16	21
Obolon	14	6	3	5	15	16	21
Illichivets	14	3	7	4	16	19	16
Metalurh Z	14	4	3	7	13	19	15
Borysfen	14	4	3	7	8	15	15
Vorskla	14	3	5	6	9	20	14
Karpaty	14	3	4	7	13	18	13
Kryvbas	14	2	5	7	9	18	11
Volyn	14	3	2	9	10	22	11
Tavriya	14	2	4	8	7	15	10
Zirka	14	2	4	8	7	18	10

SOUTH AMERICA

ARGENTINA

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Friday, October 10

Racing Club 2 (Lopez 66, Milito 86)
Lanus 2 (Carrario 47, Mannara 90)

Saturday, October 11

Chacarita Juniors 1 (Milla 41)
Talleres Cordoba 2 (De Bruno 31, Piriz Alvez 76)

Gimnasia LP 0
Newell's Old Boys 2 (Vasquez 36, Patino 41)

San Lorenzo 2 (Acosta 31, 64)
Independiente 1 (Rivas 15)

Velez Sarsfield 1 (Bustos 46)
Nueva Chicago 0

Sunday, October 12

Arsenal 2 (Denis 2, Gomez 81)
Banfield 1 (Bilos 67)

Boca Juniors 2 (Donnet 48, 64)
Atletico Rafaela 0

Colon Santa Fe 1 (Miglionico 22)
River Plate 2 (Cavenaghi 19, 39)

Olimpo 0
Quilmes 1 (Ceballos 6)

Rosario Central 2 (Herrera 45, Messera 90)
Estudiantes 0

Wednesday, October 15

Boca Juniors 3 (Tevez 7, 75, Battaglia 83)
Banfield 3 (Raponi 66, Ortiz 77, Bustos Montoya 80)

Friday, October 17

Independiente 0
Gimnasia LP 1 (Rueda 53)

Saturday, October 18

Estudiantes 0
Velez Sarsfield 2 (Bardaro 37, Bujan 54)

Talleres Cordoba 2 (Avendano 26, Corsico 80)
Racing Club 0

Sunday, October 19

Arsenal 2 (Vilallonga 79, Gomez 90)
Olimpo 0

Atletico Rafaela 1 (Juarez pen 7)
Chacarita Juniors 1 (Milla 86)

Banfield 2 (Cervera 57, Galarza 63)
Lanus 1 (Andrizzi 77)

Newell's Old Boys 1 (Patino 52)
Rosario Central 1 (Talamonti 77)

Nueva Chicago 0
Boca Juniors 2 (Burdisso 33, Cangele 60)

Quilmes 2 (Garnier 3, Lopez 64)
Colon Santa Fe 0

River Plate 1 (Cavenaghi 85)
San Lorenzo 2 (Acosta 26, Montillo 55)

Friday, October 24

Velez Sarsfield 0
Newell's Old Boys 3 (Silvani 31, Bermudez 59, Rosales 72)

Saturday, October 25

Chacarita Juniors 4 (Graf 21, Mignini 27, Milla 81, Figueroa 87)
Nueva Chicago 0

Colon Santa Fe 1 (Savoia 89)
Arsenal 0

Racing Club 4 (Gonzalez pen 2, Milito 20, Orozco 52, Estevez pen 90)
Atletico Rafaela 1 (Juarez pen 40)

Rosario Central 2 (Carbonari pen 2, Belloso 80)
Independiente 0

Sunday, October 26

Boca Juniors 2 (Donnet 36, Tevez 40)
Estudiantes 0

Gimnasia LP 0
River Plate 2 (Lopez 9, Cavenaghi 81)

Lanus 2 (Romero 64, Alvarez pen 83)
Talleres Cordoba 1 (Maidana 80)

Olimpo 3 (Mena pen 5, Dure 28, Delorte 88)
Banfield 1 (Cervera 57)

San Lorenzo 0
Quilmes 1 (Gerlo 15)

Tuesday, October 28

Nueva Chicago 0
Racing Club 4 (Milito 50, 79, Gonzalez 60, Lopez 75)

Wednesday, October 29

Arsenal 0
San Lorenzo 2 (Acosta 12, Rodriguez 65)

Atletico Rafaela 2 (Del Bono 1, 90)
Lanus 3 (Galvan 30, Andrizzi 50, Mannara 52)

Banfield 2 (Ortiz 40, Cervera 46)
Talleres Cordoba 1 (Salas 55)

Estudiantes 2 (Farias 4, Angeleri 17)
Chacarita Juniors 1 (Pena pen 90)

Newell's Old Boys 1 (Silvani 29)
Boca Juniors 0

Olimpo 3 (Delorte 7, 56, Mazzoni 90)
Colon Santa Fe 0

Quilmes 1 (Gerlo 66)
Gimnasia LP 0

River Plate 2 (Cavenaghi 39, Dominguez 76)
Rosario Central 1 (Ameli og 52)

Thursday, October 30

Independiente 0
Velez Sarsfield 1 (Somoza 54)

Saturday, November 1

Chacarita Juniors 1 (Pedernera 51)
Newell's Old Boys 1 (Silvani 37)

Racing Club 1 (Romero 90)
Estudiantes 0

Rosario Central 1 (Gonzalez 90)
Quilmes 0

San Lorenzo 2 (Acosta 84, pen 89)
Olimpo 0

Sunday, November 2

Boca Juniors 0
Independiente 0

Colon Santa Fe 0
Banfield 2 (Bustos Montoya 14, Cervera 15)

Gimnasia LP 1 (Choy 54)
Arsenal 1 (Gonzalez 58)

Lanus 1 (Carrario 2)
Nueva Chicago 1 (San Esteban 79)

Talleres Cordoba 4 (De Bruno 61, 63, Piriz Alvez 71, Avendano pen 86)
Atletico Rafaela 0

Velez Sarsfield 1 (Bardaro 38)
River Plate 1 (Ferreyra 56)

ARGENTINA – OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Boca Juniors	13	8	4	1	24	7	28
San Lorenzo	13	8	2	3	18	9	26
Rosario Central	13	7	4	2	19	14	25
Banfield	13	7	3	3	21	13	24
Quilmes	13	7	3	3	17	10	24
Newell's OB	13	6	5	2	17	8	23
River Plate	13	5	4	4	17	16	19
Racing Club	13	4	6	3	19	16	18
Colon Santa Fe	13	4	5	4	15	15	17
Arsenal	13	4	5	4	12	12	17
Talleres Cordoba	13	4	4	5	19	21	16
Velez Sarsfield	13	4	4	5	14	19	16
Lanus	13	2	9	2	15	16	15
Independiente	13	3	5	5	11	12	14
Estudiantes	13	3	4	6	8	13	13
Atletico Rafaela	13	3	4	6	15	22	13
Chacarita Jnrs*	13	3	6	4	14	15	12
Olimpo	13	2	3	8	9	18	9
Gimnasia LP	13	1	5	7	6	18	8
Nueva Chicago	13	1	3	9	8	24	6

**3pts deducted for crowd violence*

LEADING GOALSCORERS
9 Fernando Cavenaghi (River Plate)
8 Alberto Acosta (San Lorenzo)
8 Jorge Cervera (Banfield)
8 Carlos Tevez (Boca Juniors)

BOLIVIA

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

First stage

Oct 9: Oriente 0 Guabira 0.
Oct 11: Iberoamericana 2 Independiente 1.
Oct 12: Aurora 2 San Jose 2; Blooming 2 Union Central 1; Guabira 1 Jorge Wilstermann 3; Real Potosi 2 Bolivar 1.
Oct 22: Jorge Wilstermann 1 The Strongest 2; Independiente 0 Oriente 0; Bolivar 3 Aurora 1; Union Central 2 San Jose 0; Blooming 1 Real Potosi 0; Iberoamericana 3 Guabira 0.
Oct 24: The Strongest 1 Oriente 0.
Oct 26: Oriente 8 Jorge Wilstermann 3; The Strongest 3 Iberoamericana 0; Real Potosi 3 Union Central 1; Aurora 1 Blooming 1; San Jose 1 Bolivar 1; Guabira 2 Independiente 0.

BOLIVIA – CLOSING: GROUP A – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Blooming	12	6	2	4	20	19	20
Real Potosi	12	6	1	5	16	17	19
Bolivar	12	5	3	4	27	15	18
Aurora	12	3	7	2	17	17	16
San Jose	12	3	4	5	16	25	13
Union Central	12	2	3	7	12	18	9

GROUP B – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
The Strongest	12	8	1	3	23	10	25
Oriente	12	5	5	2	26	12	20
Iberoamericana	12	5	2	5	13	17	17
J Wilstermann	12	4	4	4	18	21	16
Independiente	12	4	2	6	11	23	14
Guabira	12	3	2	7	10	15	11

Top four from each group qualified for play-offs

Play-offs

Oct 30: Blooming 2 Bolivar 0; Real Potosi 1 Aurora 2; Jorge Wilstermann 1 Oriente 0.
Oct 31: The Strongest 0 Iberoamericana 0.
Nov 2: Aurora 1 The Strongest 0; Bolivar 4 Jorge Wilstermann 2; Oriente 1 Blooming 2.

PLAY-OFFS – GROUP 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Blooming	2	2	0	0	4	1	6
Bolivar	2	1	0	1	4	4	3
J Wilstermann	2	1	0	1	3	4	3
Oriente	2	0	0	2	1	3	0

PLAY-OFFS – GROUP 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Aurora	2	2	0	0	3	1	6
Iberoamericana	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
The Strongest	2	0	1	1	0	1	1
Real Potosi	1	0	0	1	1	2	0

BRAZIL

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Oct 11: Sao Caetano 2 Santos 2; Atletico Paranaense 2 Coritiba 0; Guarani 1 Ponte Preta 3.
Oct 12: Vitoria 2 Bahia 1; Flamengo 2 Vasco da Gama 1; Goias 6 Fluminense 1; Sao Paulo 3 Corinthians 0; Atletico Mineiro 0 Cruzeiro 1; Internacional 0 Gremio 1; Juventude 1 Parana 1; Figueirense 4 Criciuma 2.
Oct 15: Paysandu 3 Fortaleza 0.
Oct 18: Gremio 2 Atletico Mineiro 2; Flamengo 2 Paysandu 0; Guarani 2 Fluminense 0; Goias 3 Sao Paulo 1; Coritiba 3 Bahia 2.
Oct 19: Corinthians 3 Ponte Preta 0; Santos 3 Atletico Paranaense 2; Parana 4 Internacional 0; Criciuma 2 Vasco da Gama 1; Fortaleza 1 Figueirense 1; Vitoria 0 Sao Caetano 0; Cruzeiro 1 Juventude 2.
Oct 22: Bahia 4 Santos 7; Internacional 1 Cruzeiro 0; Figueirense 0 Flamengo 0; Fluminense 1 Corinthians 0; Sao Caetano 2 Coritiba 0; Atletico Paranaense 1 Vitoria 2; Ponte Preta 0 Goias 2.
Oct 23: Paysandu 4 Criciuma 0; Atletico Mineiro 2 Parana 2; Juventude 1 Gremio 2; Vasco da Gama 1 Fortaleza 1; Sao Paulo 3 Guarani 3.
Oct 25: Bahia 2 Fluminense 2; Cruzeiro 1 Figueirense 0; Coritiba 0 Santos 4; Ponte Preta 1 Vitoria 1.
Oct 26: Paysandu 1 Atletico Mineiro 0; Parana 3 Vasco da Gama 3; Flamengo 2 Gremio 1; Corinthians 2 Atletico Paranaense 3; Sao Caetano 0 Sao Paulo 1; Criciuma 2 Fortaleza 2; Internacional 0 Juventude 0; Goias 3 Guarani 0.
Nov 1: Fluminense 2 Ponte Preta 2; Atletico Mineiro 1 Criciuma 1; Gremio 0 Parana 2; Atletico Paranaense 1 Sao Caetano 0; Guarani 3 Bahia 2.
Nov 2: Sao Paulo 1 Coritiba 0; Fortaleza 1 Cruzeiro 2; Vasco da Gama 0 Internacional 1; Figueirense 6 Paysandu 0; Vitoria 3 Goias 4; Santos 3 Corinthians 1; Juventude 2 Flamengo 2.

BRAZIL – NATIONAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cruzeiro	40	25	7	8	81	43	82
Santos	40	22	10	8	80	49	76
Sao Paulo	40	19	11	10	70	57	68
Coritiba	40	19	8	13	59	51	65
Internacional*	40	18	8	14	50	45	64
At Mineiro	40	16	15	9	67	54	63
Sao Caetano**	40	15	14	11	40	32	62
Goias	40	16	11	13	69	53	59
Parana	40	16	9	15	75	64	57
Guarani	40	16	9	15	61	64	57
Criciuma	40	16	9	15	52	57	57
Flamengo	40	15	11	14	56	62	56
Vitoria	40	14	10	16	47	55	52
Figueirense	40	13	13	14	51	49	52
Corinthians**	40	13	11	16	56	56	52
At Paranaense	40	14	8	18	53	60	50
Vasco da Gama	40	11	13	16	48	60	46
Paysandu**	40	14	11	15	66	65	45
Ponte Preta*/**	40	10	16	14	55	64	45
Juventude*	40	9	14	17	46	62	44
Fluminense**	40	10	11	19	43	65	43
Fortaleza	40	10	11	19	46	63	41
Bahia	40	10	10	20	53	75	40
Gremio	40	9	10	21	41	60	37

**Ponte Preta have been docked the 4pts gained from the 1-1 draw with Internacional and the 1-0 win over Juventude for fielding an ineligible player in each game; Internacional were awarded two extra points (ie the equivalent of a win), and Juventude received three points.*
***Paysandu have been docked the 8pts gained from the 2-2 draw with Corinthians, the 3-2 win over Ponte Preta, the 1-0 win over Sao Caetano and the 1-1 draw with Fluminense for fielding ineligible players in each game; Corinthians and Fluminense were awarded two extra points (ie the equivalent of a win), and Ponte Preta and Sao Caetano received three points.*
In both cases the won-drawn-lost and goals records were not altered.

CHILE

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Oct 14: Rangers 1 U Catolica 0; Cobreloa 2 Audax Italiano 1; U de Concepcion 2 San Felipe 0; Coquimbo Unido 2 Union Espanola 1.
Oct 15: U de Chile 0 Palestino 2; Dep Temuco 2 Huachipato 1; Santiago Wanderers 3 Cobresal 1; Puerto Montt 1 Colo Colo 2.
Oct 17: U Catolica 1 Coquimbo Unido 1.
Oct 18: Colo Colo 4 Dep Temuco 0; Palestino 6 Rangers 2; San Felipe 2 Huachipato 4; Union Espanola 3 Cobreloa 1.
Oct 19: U de Concepcion 2 U de Chile 2; Audax Italiano 0 Santiago Wanderers 0; Cobresal 5 Puerto Montt 1.
Oct 24: Santiago Wanderers 2 Union Espanola 2.
Oct 25: Huachipato 3 Colo Colo 3; Coquimbo Unido 0 Palestino 2; Cobreloa 3 U Catolica 0.
Oct 26: Puerto Montt 0 Audax Italiano 3; U de Chile 3 San Felipe 1; Rangers 0 U de Concepcion 6; Dep Temuco 0 Cobresal 1.
Oct 31: U de Chile 3 Rangers 0.
Nov 1: Palestino 2 Cobreloa 2; U Catolica 2 Santiago Wanderers 4; Union Espanola 3 Puerto Montt 1;
Nov 2: Cobresal 4 Huachipato 2; San Felipe 1 Colo Colo 1; U de Concepcion 1 Coquimbo Unido 0; Audax Italiano 1 Dep Temuco 0.

CHILE – CLOSING: GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
U de Chile	14	6	2	6	25	19	20
Cobreloa	14	5	4	5	28	24	19
Huachipato	14	5	2	7	28	32	17
Dep Temuco	14	3	1	10	17	36	10

GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Colo Colo	14	8	5	1	35	18	29
Palestino	14	8	2	4	33	24	26
Sant Wanderers	14	6	6	2	23	20	24
Audax Italiano	14	5	2	7	14	20	17

GROUP C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Union Espanola	14	8	4	2	34	21	28
U Catolica	14	5	2	7	20	24	17
Puerto Montt	14	5	0	9	23	32	15
Coquimbo Unido	14	2	3	9	13	24	9

GROUP D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
U de Concepcion	14	9	5	0	35	13	32
Cobresal	14	6	4	4	28	22	22
Rangers	14	5	1	8	17	35	16
San Felipe	14	3	3	8	21	30	12

COLOMBIA

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

First stage

Oct 5: At Huila 0 Indep Santa Fe 0; Centauros 1 At Nacional 1; America 1 Tulua 1; Envigado 1 At Junior 1; Once Caldas 1 Pereira 1; Millonarios 2 Bucaramanga 1; Magdalena 3 Dep Cali 0; Quindio 2 Dep Pasto 0; Indep Medellin 1 Tolima 0.
Oct 8: Indep Santa Fe 1 Indep Medellin 2; Tolima 2 Quindio 1; Dep Pasto 2 Magdalena 1; Dep Cali 3 Millonarios 0; Bucaramanga 3 Once Caldas 2; Pereira 1 Envigado 1; At Junior 1 America 2; Tulua 0 Centauros 0; At Nacional 2 At Huila 1.
Oct 12: At Nacional 1 Indep Santa Fe 1; At Huila 3 Tulua 2; Centauros 1 At Junior 2; America 4 Pereira 3; Envigado 1 Bucaramanga 1; Once Caldas 2 Dep Cali 3; Millonarios 0 Dep Pasto 1; Magdalena 2 Tolima 0; Quindio 1 Indep Medellin 1.
Oct 19: Indep Medellin 1 Magdalena 0; Tolima 3 Millonarios 0; Dep Pasto 1 Once Caldas 0; Indep Santa Fe 0 Quindio 0; Dep Cali 1 Envigado 1; Bucaramanga 2 America 2; Pereira 1 Centauros 1; At Junior 1 At Huila 0; Tulua 0 At Nacional 1.
Oct 29: Tulua 1 Indep Santa Fe 1; At Nacional 4 At Junior 2; At Huila 2 Pereira 1; Centauros 1 Bucaramanga 1; America 1 Dep Cali 3; Envigado 2 Dep Pasto 3; Once Caldas 1 Tolima 0; Millonarios 3 Indep Medellin 1; Magdalena 0 Quindio 2.
Nov 2: Indep Santa Fe 3 Magdalena 0; Quindio 3 Millonarios 1; Indep Medellin 1 Once Caldas 0; Tolima 1 Envigado 1; Dep Pasto 1 America 2; Dep Cali 3 Centauros 0; Bucaramanga 1 At Huila 1; Pereira 1 At Nacional 0; At Junior 1 Tulua 0.

COLOMBIA – CLOSING – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dep Cali	18	10	4	4	31	15	34
At Nacional	18	9	5	4	23	14	32
Magdalena	18	9	1	8	20	18	28
Indep Medellin	18	8	4	6	20	15	28
Dep Pasto	18	8	4	6	20	18	28
Tolima	18	7	6	5	22	17	27
Millonarios	18	8	2	8	21	20	26
At Junior	18	7	4	7	24	28	25
Pereira	18	6	7	5	20	18	25
Quindio	18	6	7	5	21	20	25
America	18	6	7	5	23	23	25
At Huila	18	6	6	6	23	25	24
Indep Santa Fe	18	5	9	4	14	13	24
Once Caldas	18	4	6	8	20	26	18
Envigado	18	3	9	6	18	21	18
Bucaramanga	18	4	5	9	24	30	17
Tulua	18	4	5	9	15	26	17
Centauros	18	4	5	9	15	27	17

Top eight qualify for play-offs

ECUADOR

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Oct 12:

OVERALL CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY-OFFS

Oct 17: Dep Cuenca 3 Dep Quito 0.
Oct 19: LDU Quito 1 Barcelona 0; Emelec 1 El Nacional 4.
Oct 24: Dep Quito 0 Emelec 1.
Oct 25: Barcelona 2 Dep Cuenca 1; El Nacional 0 LDU Quito 1.
Oct 29: Dep Quito 1 El Nacional 2; Dep Cuenca 1 LDU Quito 3; Emelec 2 Barcelona 1.
Nov 2: El Nacional 1 Barcelona 2; LDU Quito 4 Dep Quito 2; Emelec 1 Dep Cuenca 1.

OVERALL CHAMP'SHIP PLAY-OFFS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
LDU Quito	4	4	0	0	9	3	17 [5]
Barcelona	4	2	0	2	5	5	11 [5]
El Nacional	4	2	0	2	7	5	8 [2]
Emelec	4	2	1	1	5	6	7
Dep Cuenca	4	1	1	2	6	6	4
Dep Quito	4	0	0	4	3	10	0

Bonus points from opening and closing championships in brackets

PARAGUAY

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Oct 10: Tacuary 1 Guarani 4.
Oct 11: Olimpia 3 Sportivo Luqueno 1.
Oct 12: San Lorenzo 2 Sol de America 1; 12 de Octubre 1 Sport Colombia 0; Libertad 2 Cerro Porteno 2.
Oct 17: Libertad 3 Tacuary 0.
Oct 18: Guarani 1 Olimpia 2.
Oct 26: Sol de America 4 12 de Octubre 0; Sportivo Luqueno 1 San Lorenzo 0; Cerro Porteno 2 Sport Colombia 0.
Oct 25: Tacuary 0 Cerro Porteno 1; Sport Colombia 1 Sol de America 1.
Oct 26: San Lorenzo 2 Guarani 2; 12 de Octubre 0 Sportivo Luqueno 0; Olimpia 1 Libertad 2.

PARAGUAY – CLOSING – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Libertad	18	9	6	3	32	20	33
Olimpia	18	9	6	3	30	18	33
Cerro Porteno	18	9	5	4	24	15	32
Guarani	18	7	6	5	24	17	27
Sportivo Luqueno	18	7	6	5	21	20	27
Sol de America	18	4	7	7	17	16	19
12 de Octubre	18	4	7	7	7	14	19
San Lorenzo	18	4	6	8	18	32	18
Tacuary	18	4	5	9	20	29	17
Sport Colombia	18	4	4	10	22	34	16

Top two went into play-off as they finished level on points

Play-off

Oct 30
Libertad 0
Olimpia 0
Libertad 6-5 on pens – win closing championship; also national championship since they won opening championship too

PERU

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Oct 8: Sporting Cristal 2 Dep Wanka 0; Coronel Bolognesi 3 Melgar 0; At Universidad 2 Universitario 0; Alianza Lima 2 Alianza Atletico 0; Union Huaral 1 Estudiantes 0; Cienciano 1 Sport Boys 1.
Oct 12: Union Huaral 2 Cienciano 1.
Oct 18: Universitario 3 Union Huaral 0; Sport Boys 1 At Universidad 0.
Oct 19: Melgar 1 Alianza Lima 1; Alianza Atletico 1 Sporting Cristal 1; Estudiantes 2 Cienciano 3; Dep Wanka 1 Coronel Bolognesi 1.
Oct 22: Alianza Lima 2 Dep Wanka 1; Sport Boys 5 Estudiantes 0; Alianza Atletico 2 Melgar 1; Coronel Bolognesi 0 Sporting Cristal 4; At Universidad 2 Union Huaral 0; Cienciano 2 Universitario 0.
Oct 26: Sporting Cristal 2 Sport Boys 4; Melgar 1 Cienciano 0; Universitario 1 Alianza Lima 2; Estudiantes 1 Coronel Bolognesi 4; Dep Wanka 1 At Universidad 1; Union Huaral 1 Alianza Atletico 0.
Nov 2: Union Huaral 0 Alianza Lima 4; Sport Boys 3 Melgar 2; Estudiantes 0 Dep Wanka 4; Universitario 1 Alianza Atletico 1; At Universidad 1 Coronel Bolognesi 2; Cienciano 3 Sporting Cristal 4.
Nov 5: Alianza Lima 1 Sport Boys 0; Coronel Bolognesi 0 Universitario 1; Alianza Atletico 4 Cienciano 1; Sporting Cristal 3 Estudiantes 1; Dep Wanka 0 Union Huaral 3; Melgar 1 At Universidad 0.

PERU – CLOSING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Alianza Lima	15	10	4	1	29	9	34
Alianza Atletico	15	8	5	2	25	13	29
Sporting Cristal	15	7	6	2	29	18	27
Sport Boys	15	8	3	4	27	17	27
Melgar	15	7	1	7	26	22	22
Coronel Bolognesi	15	7	1	7	22	19	22
Union Huaral	15	6	3	6	12	17	21
Universitario	15	4	4	7	13	19	16
Cienciano	14	4	3	7	17	20	15
Dep Wanka	15	4	3	8	11	23	15
At Universidad	14	4	2	8	9	18	14
Estudiantes	15	1	3	11	10	34	6

URUGUAY

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Oct 10: Bella Vista M 1 Liverpool 2.
Oct 11: Penarol 3 Central Espanol 1; Defensor 3 River Plate 3; Villa Espanola 0 Tacuarembo 0; Dep Colonia 2 Cerro 0; Dep Maldonado 3 Wanderers 0; Danubio 1 Fenix 1; Plaza 1 Miramar Misiones 3.
Oct 12: Juventud 0 Nacional 3.
Oct 18: Miramar Misiones 2 Cerro 2.
Oct 19: Nacional 2 Defensor 2; Tacuarembo 2 Penarol 0; Dep Colonia 1 Bella Vista M 0; River Plate 3 Plaza 2; Liverpool 0 Dep Maldonado 0; Wanderers 1 Danubio 1; Central Espanol 2 Juventud 1; Villa Espanola 1 Fenix 2.
Oct 25: Wanderers 0 Miramar Misiones 2.
Oct 26: Juventud 0 Fenix 2; River Plate 2 Villa Espanola 0; Dep Colonia 1 Danubio 1; Tacuarembo 1 Deportivo Maldonado 1; Liverpool 1 Defensor 1; Bella Vista M 3 Plaza 3; Cerro 2 Penarol 1.
Oct 30: Nacional 2 Central Espanol 0.
Nov 1: Fenix 1 Penarol 1; Bella Vista M 1 Danubio 2; Villa Espanola 0 Liverpool 2; Plaza 0 Wanderers 2; Dep Maldonado 2 River Plate 3; Tacuarembo 0 Miramar Misiones 1; Juventud 0 Defensor 2.
Nov 2: Nacional 1 Cerro 1; Dep Colonia 1 Central Espanol 0.

URUGUAY – CLOSING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Penarol	13	8	3	2	18	9	27
Miramar Misiones	13	7	4	2	21	12	25
River Plate	13	7	3	3	24	20	24
Nacional	13	6	4	3	25	17	22
Cerro	13	6	4	3	18	13	22
Fenix	13	6	4	3	17	12	22
Liverpool	13	6	4	3	15	11	22
Danubio	13	5	6	2	18	14	21
Dep Maldonado	13	5	4	4	13	11	19
Central Espanol	13	6	1	6	14	15	19
Defensor	13	5	3	5	21	16	18
Dep Colonia	13	4	4	5	13	15	16
Bella Vista M	13	4	4	5	16	19	16
Wanderers	13	4	4	5	13	16	16
Tacuarembo	13	3	4	6	11	17	13
Villa Espanola	13	1	3	9	11	21	6
Plaza	13	1	3	9	13	27	6
Juventud	13	2	0	11	10	26	6

VENEZUELA

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Oct 19: El Vigia 3 Ital-Chacao 2; Monagas 0 Maracaibo 1; Dep Tachira 3 Carabobo 1; Trujillanos 0 Mineros Guayana 0; Caracas 1 Estudiantes 1.
Oct 25: Caracas 2 Mineros Guayana 1.
Oct 26: Ital-Chacao 3 Estudiantes 0; Carabobo 1 Trujillanos 0; Dep Tachira 2 Maracaibo 1; El Vigia 2 Monagas 0.
Nov 2: Monagas 0 Ital-Chacao 0; Dep Tachira 2 El Vigia 2; Trujillanos 2 Maracaibo 0; Caracas 2 Carabobo 2; Estudiantes 0 Mineros Guayana 2.

VENEZUELA – OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dep Tachira	12	7	5	0	20	10	26
Caracas	12	6	5	1	24	13	23
Mineros Guayana	12	7	2	3	14	10	23
El Vigia	12	3	7	2	15	13	16
Ital-Chacao	12	4	3	5	19	19	15
Maracaibo	12	3	4	5	9	10	13
Monagas	12	3	3	6	10	18	12
Estudiantes	12	3	3	6	8	16	12
Carabobo	12	2	5	5	16	20	11
Trujillanos	12	2	3	7	7	13	9

CENTRAL & NORTH AMERICA

CONCACAF CHAMPIONS CUP

Final, 1st leg

Sep 17 - Morelos stadium, Morelia
Morelia (Mex) 3 (Navia 44, 63, Alvarez 69)
Toluca (Mex) 3 (Lopez 6, 82, Lozano 13)
HT: 1-2. **Ref:** Archundia (Mex)
Morelia: Fuentes - 0 Trujillo, Franco, Gonzalez, Hernan, Almiron, Ramirez, M Trujillo (Hernandez 85), Navia, Alvarez, Zepeda (Molina 83).
Toluca: Cristante - Cruzalta, Cuberas, Viades (Castillejos 78), Carreon (Espinosa 54), Da Silva, Lopez, Naelson, Lozano, Ponce (Garcia 65), Sanchez.

Final, 2nd leg

Oct 8 - Nemesio Diaz stadium, Toluca
Toluca 2 (Da Silva 35, Sanchez 54)
Morelia 1 (Alvarez 81)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Alcala (Mex)
Toluca 5-4 on agg
Toluca: Cristante - Carmona, Espinosa, Da Silva, Viades, Carreon, Lopez, Garcia, Naelson (Gonzalez 88), Sanchez, Cardozo.
Morelia: Munoz - 0 Trujillo, Gonzalez, Hernan, Ramirez (Molina 84), Almiron, M Trujillo, Morales, Navia, Zepeda (Santillana 74), Alvarez. *Sent off: Morales 89min.*

MEXICO

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Oct 11: Jaguares 1 Atlas 1; Morelia 1 Monterrey 0; Tigres 4 Veracruz 1; Guadalajara 2 Pumas UNAM 0; Necaxa 1 Puebla 0.
Oct 12: Toluca 1 Cruz Azul 2; Atlante 2 San Luis 0; Pachuca 2 America 1; Gallos Blancos 0 Tecos UAG 3; Santos 5 Irapuato 0.
Oct 18: San Luis 1 Jaguares 2; Veracruz 2 Toluca 3; Monterrey 3 Gallos Blancos 1; Cruz Azul 2 Guadalajara 1; Atlas 3 Pachuca 1.
Oct 19: Pumas UNAM 2 Necaxa 0; America 1 Morelia 0; Irapuato 3 Puebla 1; Santos 2 Atlante 3; Tecos UAG 2 Tigres 1.
Oct 22: Puebla 1 Pumas UNAM 1; Toluca 2 Tecos UAG 1; Pachuca 2 San Luis 0; Necaxa 0 Cruz Azul 0; Morelia 2 Atlas 1; Guadalajara 3 Veracruz 1; Gallos Blancos 1 America 3; Tigres 3 Monterrey 2.
Oct 23: Jaguares 1 Santos 1; Atlante 0 Irapuato 1.
Oct 25: Veracruz 3 Necaxa 2; Monterrey 0 Toluca 0; Cruz Azul 1 Puebla 0; San Luis 0 Morelia 1; Atlas 0 Gallos Blancos 1.
Oct 26: America 2 Tigres 1; Irapuato 0 Pumas UNAM 1; Atlante 3 Jaguares 0; Tecos UAG 2 Guadalajara 4; Santos 1 Pachuca 2.
Nov 1: Toluca 6 America 0; Jaguares 2 Irapuato 2; Morelia 2 Santos 4; Tigres 4 Atlas 1; Guadalajara 0 Monterrey 2; Necaxa 0 Tecos UAG 0.
Nov 2: Pachuca 0 Atlante 0; Pumas UNAM 2 Cruz Azul 1; Gallos Blancos 4 San Luis 4; Puebla 3 Veracruz 4.
Nov 4: Tigres 1 Toluca 0.

MEXICO – OPENING: GROUP 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Pachuca	16	7	6	3	23	18	27
Toluca	16	7	3	6	26	19	24
Monterrey	16	5	6	5	29	27	21
Puebla	16	4	5	7	20	24	17
Atlas	16	4	3	9	26	30	15

GROUP 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tigres	16	10	3	3	33	17	33
Morelia	16	7	2	7	21	24	23
Cruz Azul	16	5	6	5	21	24	21
Jaguares	16	5	4	7	20	31	19
San Luis	16	2	5	9	19	30	11

GROUP 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Pumas UNAM	16	9	4	3	27	18	31
Tecos UAG	16	8	3	5	25	21	27
America	16	7	4	5	29	22	25
Santos	16	6	6	4	35	25	24
Gallos Blancos	16	1	3	12	15	40	6

GROUP 4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Atlante	16	7	5	4	26	17	26
Necaxa	16	6	7	3	21	17	25
Veracruz	16	6	3	7	27	32	21
Guadalajara	16	6	2	8	25	26	20
Irapuato	16	6	4	6	22	28	20

LEADING GOALSCORERS
10 Alex Fernandes (Monterrey)
10 Emilio Mora (Veracruz)
10 Carlos Morales (Atlas)
10 Reinaldo Navia (Morelia)

UNITED STATES

Oct 10: Chicago Fire 2 Columbus Crew 0; Colorado Rapids 0 San Jose Earthquakes 0 (aet).
Oct 11: MetroStars 0 Dallas Burn 0 (aet); Kansas City Wizards 2 Los Angeles Galaxy 1 (aet); New England Revolution 1 DC United 0.
Oct 18: MetroStars 1 New England Revolution 2; Chicago Fire 4 Colorado Rapids 3; Los Angeles Galaxy 3 San Jose Earthquakes 0; Kansas City Wizards 1 Dallas Burn 0.
Oct 19: DC United 2 Columbus Crew 3 (aet).
Oct 25: New England Revolution 5 MetroStars 2; DC United 1 Kansas City Wizards 1 (aet); Dallas Burn 4 Colorado Rapids 3; San Jose Earthquakes 1 Los Angeles Galaxy 1 (aet).
Oct 26: Columbus Crew 6 Chicago Fire 2.

USA – EASTERN CONFERENCE – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Chicago Fire	30	15	8	7	53	43	53
New England	30	12	9	9	55	47	45
MetroStars	30	11	9	10	40	40	42
DC United	30	10	9	11	38	36	39
Columbus Crew	30	10	8	12	44	44	38

USA – WESTERN CONFERENCE – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
San Jose	30	14	9	7	45	35	51
Kansas City	30	11	9	10	48	44	42
Colorado Rapids	30	11	7	12	40	45	40
LA Galaxy	30	9	9	12	35	35	36
Dallas Burn	30	6	5	19	35	64	23

Top four in each conference qualified for quarter-finals

TOP GOALSCORERS
15 Carlos Ruiz (Los Angeles Galaxy)
15 Taylor Twellman (New England Revolution)
14 Ante Razov (Chicago Fire)
14 John Spencer (Colorado Rapids)
12 Landon Donovan (San Jose Earthquakes)
12 Brian McBride (Columbus Crew)
12 Preki (Kansas City Wizards)

Quarter-finals

1st legs
Nov 1: DC United 0 Chicago Fire 2; MetroStars 0 New England Revolution 2; Los Angeles Galaxy 2 San Jose Earthquakes 0.
Nov 4: Colorado Rapids 1 Kansas City Wizards 1.

AFRICA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Quarter-finals groups

Group A

October 19

ASEC Abidjan (IvC) 4 (Mahan 8, Die 17, pen 90, Mabea 66)
Simba (Tan) 3 (Pawasa 52, Macho 64, Mwakingwe 82)
HT: 2-0

Enyimba (Nig) 4 (Anumnu 2 (1 pen), Ogunbiyi, Nwanna)
Ismaili (Egy) 2 (El-Gamal, Mohsen)
HT: 2-1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Enyimba	6	4	0	2	14	11	12
Ismaili	6	3	2	1	13	7	11
Simba	6	2	1	3	7	10	7
ASEC Abidjan	6	1	1	4	6	12	4

Group B

October 18

AS Aviacao (Ang) 1 (Kabungula)
Canon Yaounde (Cam) 2 (Enoke, Djan)
HT: 1-0

Esperance (Tun) 2 (Ben Younes 3, Azaiez 18)
USM Alger (Alg) 0
HT: 2-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Esperance	6	4	2	0	7	2	14
USM Alger	6	3	0	3	7	4	9
Canon Yaounde	6	2	1	3	6	10	7
AS Aviacao	6	1	1	4	3	7	4

Top two from each group qualified for semi-finals

Semi-finals, 1st legs

October 31

USM Alger 1 (Ouichaoui pen 38)
Enyimba 1 (Ochei 62)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Codjia (Ben)
Sent off: Omolade (Enyimba) 70min

November 1

Ismaili 3 (Traore 30, Abd Rabo pen 86, Dioubate 88)
Esperance 1 (Jaidi 70)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Damon (SAf)
Sent off: Triki (Esperance) 83min

CUP-WINNERS CUP

Semi-finals, 2nd legs

Oct 18: APR FC (Rwa) 2 Julius Berger (Nig) 0 *Julius Berger 3-2 on agg.*
Oct 19: Wydad Casablanca (Mor) 0 Etoile Sahel (Tun) 1 *Etoile 3-0 on agg.*

CAF CUP

Semi-finals, 2nd legs

Oct 19: Club Africain (Tun) 2 Cotonsport (Cam) 1 *Cotonsport 4-2 on agg;* Enugu Rangers (Nig) 2 Raja Casablanca (Mor) 0 *Raja 4-3 on agg.*

ASIA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Final, 2nd leg

Oct 11 - Rajamangala stadium, Bangkok
BEC Tero Sasana (Tha) 1 (Therdsak 60)
Al Ain (UAE) 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 35,000
Al Ain 2-1 on agg
BEC: Phansa - Jatupong, Preratat, Thanongsak, Worachai, Dusit, Therdsak, Datsakorn, Sakchai, Worawoot, Sakesan.
Al Ain: Salem - Afanou, A Ali, Fahad Ali, Jawhar, Hareb, Fakher, Khater, Faisal Ali, Omar, Rodrigo Mendes.

JAPAN

SECOND STAGE

Oct 18: FC Tokyo 1 Urawa Reds 1; Jubilo Iwata 2 Oita Trinita 0; Nagoya Grampus Eight 1 Vissel Kobe 2; Kashima Antlers 2 Shimizu S-Pulse 0; Vegalta Sendai 1 JEF United Ichihara 2, Kyoto Purple Sanga 0 Yokohama F Marinos 0.
Oct 19: Kashiwa Reysol 0 Tokyo Verdy 1969 2; Cerezo Osaka 0 Gamba Osaka 2.
Oct 26: Gamba Osaka 3 Nagoya Grampus Eight 1; Vissel Kobe 2 Kashima Antlers 1; Oita Trinita 1 Kyoto Purple Sanga 0; Shimizu S-Pulse 1 FC Tokyo 3; Tokyo Verdy 1969 0 Vegalta Sendai 0; JEF United Ichihara 1 Jubilo Iwata 1.
Oct 27: Yokohama F Marinos 2 Cerezo Osaka 2; Urawa Reds 0 Kashiwa Reysol 0.

JAPAN – 2ND STAGE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tokyo Verdy	11	5	5	1	25	15	20
Yokohama FM	11	5	5	1	18	11	20
Urawa Reds	11	5	4	2	21	11	19
JEF United	11	5	4	2	18	14	19
FC Tokyo	11	4	5	2	23	15	17
Jubilo Iwata	11	4	5	2	16	13	17
Kashima Antlers	11	4	5	2	13	13	17
Gamba Osaka	11	4	4	3	15	12	16
Grampus Eight	11	4	3	4	22	21	15
Kashiwa Reysol	11	3	6	2	9	9	15
Shimizu S-Pulse	11	3	3	5	12	18	12
Kyoto PS	11	2	4	5	9	14	10
Vissel Kobe	11	2	4	5	12	19	10
Oita Trinita	11	1	5	5	5	12	8
Vegalta Sendai	11	1	5	5	10	21	8
Cerezo Osaka	11	1	3	7	15	25	6

SOUTH KOREA

Oct 12: Ulsan 1 Busan 2; Daejeon 3 Anyang 0; Suwon 1 Chunnam 2; Songnam 1 Chonbuk 2; Gwangju 1 Pohang 1; Daegu 1 Bucheon 0.
Oct 15: Songnam 1 Pohang 0.
Oct 25: Anyang 1 Ulsan 1.
Oct 26: Bucheon 0 Gwangju 0; Chonbuk 2 Suwon 2; Chunnam 2 Daejeon 1; Daegu 2 Busan 0; Pohang 0 Songnam 1.
Oct 29: Chunnam 4 Busan 1; Suwon 2 Chonbuk 0; Anyang 2 Songnam 2.
Nov 1: Ulsan 0 Chunnam 0; Songnam 1 Bucheon 1.
Nov 2: Busan 0 Anyang 0; Daejeon 1 Chonbuk 0; Suwon 0 Pohang 0; Gwangju 0 Daegu 2.
Nov 5: Gwangju 3 Songnam 4; Bucheon 3 Suwon 1; Pohang 3 Daejeon 0; Chonbuk 3 Ulsan 1; Chunnam 3 Busan 0; Daegu 0 Anyang 2.

SOUTH KOREA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Songnam	41	27	9	5	78	40	90
Chunnam	41	17	18	6	63	45	69
Ulsan	41	18	13	10	56	42	67
Chonbuk	41	17	13	11	64	52	64
Suwon	41	16	15	10	52	43	63
Daejeon	41	16	11	14	46	48	59
Pohang	41	15	13	13	49	43	58
Anyang	41	13	14	14	66	63	53
Gwangju	41	12	7	22	40	54	43
Busan	41	11	9	21	35	67	42
Daegu	41	7	14	20	33	54	35
Bucheon	41	3	12	26	39	70	21

The World Next Month

The most important games over the next four weeks

Fri, November 14
Mauritania v Zimbabwe (World Cup qualifier, Nouakchott)
Mali v Guinea-Bissau (World Cup qualifier, Bamoko)
Algeria v Niger (World Cup qualifier, Algiers)

Panama v Honduras (friendly, Panama City)

Sat, November 15
Zambia v Seychelles (World Cup qualifier, Lusaka)
Sierra Leone v Congo (World Cup qualifier, Freetown)
Namibia v Rwanda (World Cup qualifier, Windhoek)
Malawi v Ethiopia (World Cup qualifier, Lilongwe)
Kenya v Tanzania (World Cup qualifier, Nairobi)
Gabon v Burundi (World Cup qualifier, Libreville)
Colombia v Venezuela (World Cup qualifier, Barranquilla)
Argentina v Bolivia (World Cup qualifier, Buenos Aires)
Paraguay v Ecuador (World Cup qualifier, Asuncion)
Uruguay v Chile (World Cup qualifier, Montevideo)

Scotland v Holland (Euro 2004 play-off, Glasgow)
Russia v Wales (Euro 2004 play-off, Moscow)
Latvia v Turkey (Euro 2004 play-off, Riga)
Spain v Norway (Euro 2004 play-off, Valencia)
Croatia v Slovenia (Euro 2004 play-off, Zagreb)

South Africa v Mexico (friendly, tbc)
Portugal v Greece (friendly, Aveiro)
Morocco v Burkina Faso (friendly, tbc)
Hungary v Estonia (friendly, Budapest)
Germany v France (friendly, Gelsenkirchen)
Egypt v South Africa (friendly, tbc)
Czech Republic v Canada (friendly, Teplice)

Sun, November 16
Togo v Equatorial Guinea (World Cup qualifier, Lome)
Somalia v Ghana (World Cup qualifier, Accra)
Mauritius v Uganda (World Cup qualifier, Curepipe)
Mozambique v Guinea (World Cup qualifier, Maputo)
Lesotho v Botswana (World Cup qualifier, Maseru)
Libya v Sao Tome e Principe (World Cup qualifier, Benghazi)
Liberia v Gambia (World Cup qualifier, Monrovia)
Eritrea v Sudan (World Cup qualifier, Asmara)
Cape Verde Islands v Swaziland (World Cup qualifier, Praia)
Benin v Madagascar (World Cup qualifier, Cotonou)
Angola v Chad (World Cup qualifier, Luanda)
Peru v Brazil (World Cup qualifier, Lima)

Poland v Serbia & Montenegro (friendly, Plock)
Italy v Romania (friendly, Ancona)
England v Denmark (friendly, Manchester)
Antigua & Barbuda v Belize (friendly, St John's)

Tue, November 18
Venezuela v Bolivia (World Cup qualifier, Maracaibo)
Chile v Paraguay (World Cup qualifier, Santiago)

South Korea v Bulgaria (friendly, Seoul)
Rep Ireland v Canada (friendly, Dublin)

Wed, November 19
Turkmenistan v Afghanistan (World Cup qualifier, tbc)
Ghana v Somalia (World Cup qualifier, Kumasi)
Ecuador v Peru (World Cup qualifier, Quito)
Colombia v Argentina (World Cup qualifier, Barranquilla)
Brazil v Uruguay (World Cup qualifier, Curitiba)

Wales v Russia (Euro 2004 play-off, Cardiff)
Turkey v Latvia (Euro 2004 play-off, Istanbul)
Slovenia v Croatia (Euro 2004 play-off, Ljubljana)
Norway v Spain (Euro 2004 play-off, Oslo)
Holland v Scotland (Euro 2004 play-off, Amsterdam)

Portugal v Kuwait (friendly, tbc)
Morocco v Mali (friendly, tbc)
Japan v Cameroon (friendly, tbc)

Thu, November 20
Luxembourg v Moldova (friendly, Hesperange)

Fri, November 21
Pakistan v Kyrgyzstan (World Cup qualifier, tbc)
Mongolia v Maldives (World Cup qualifier, tbc)
Laos v Sri Lanka (World Cup qualifier, tbc)
Guam v Nepal (World Cup qualifier, tbc)

Sat, November 22
Afghanistan v Turkmenistan (World Cup qualifier, Kabul)

Costa Rica v Slovakia (friendly, tbc)

Sun, November 23
Taiwan v Macao (World Cup qualifier, Taipei)

Tue/Wed, November 25/26
UEFA Champions League matchday 5

Thu, November 27
UEFA Cup second round, second legs

Fri, November 28
Sri Lanka v Laos (World Cup qualifier, tbc)
Nepal v Guam (World Cup qualifier, tbc)
Maldives v Mongolia (World Cup qualifier, tbc)
Kyrgyzstan v Pakistan (World Cup qualifier, tbc)
Bangladesh v Tajikistan (World Cup qualifier, tbc)

Sat, November 29
Macao v Taiwan (World Cup qualifier, Macao)

Tue, December 2
Tajikistan v Bangladesh (World Cup qualifier, tbc)

Qatar v Lebanon (friendly, Abu Dhabi)

Tue/Wed, December 9/10
UEFA Champions League matchday 6

A Eurosnob writes...

Please mark your correspondence 'Letters page' and send to:
World Soccer, King's Reach Tower, Stamford Street, London SE1 9LS
Fax: +44 (0) 20 7261 7474
E-mail: worldsoccerletters@ipcmedia.com

Paul Gardner (September 2003) and the rest of MLS's small but rabid pack of fans shouldn't be yammering about Eurosnobs; rather, they should be supporting our position. MLS is as close as America has yet come to a real soccer league, but is not all the way there yet.

Plus, we came out in droves for Man Utd because the Man Utd marketing team did an outstanding job of promoting the tour. In fact, before the event, most people thought it was a strictly Man Utd tour. There was very little promotion of the whole World Series of soccer concept. So, Mr Gardner has laid blame on MLS's best fans when he should be laying praise at the feet of the Man Utd marketing machine.

The fact that MLS has come so far, so fast, is down to this best group of fans: the Eurosnobs. We like European soccer for one reason – it is the best on the planet. So, excuse me for liking the best, but I think you will find similar Amerisnobs shunning Italian baseball, hockey and American football. And, most of us haven't shunned MLS at all; we just keep pushing to make it better.

What would make it better? First, true soccer fans – the Eurosnobs – got the clock eliminated and killed the ridiculous shoot-out (which cost us our best striker prior to France 98). Since then, MLS has continued to develop with ever-better tactics and improved talent levels. MLS obviously noted this when they came up with the "It's your game" promotional campaign. It is our game, and we mean to keep it.

But there is obviously room for much improvement. And if fans just decide they are happy with the status quo, then MLS will not survive, because the three billionaires pouring money into USA soccer will not continue to do so indefinitely.

MLS needs to expand and it needs to embrace promotion/relegation. Ten teams spread out all the way across the continent lack cohesion, and the problem is only made worse by splitting them into two, meaningless divisions. MLS needs to bite the bullet and accept that not all of the money any of us would like to have is available for investment in soccer franchises in the USA.

Instead, MLS should embrace the small investor who wants to work to grow the League and develop American talent. I follow Brighton in the English Second Division, so I'm not a Eurosnob because of the lack of talent in MLS. I'm a Eurosnob because of the lack of meaning to MLS. In MLS, if your team manages to finish one above last place in your division, you still have a chance to win the League championship. That should tell any intelligent fan that sitting through 34 meaningless League games is not a wise investment.

Joe Hada, by e-mail

Gavin Hamilton replies: MLS needs relegation and promotion like it needs a hole in the head. No investor is going to pour millions into a club if he runs the risk of ending up in the A-League.

I dispute your assertion that 'Eurosnobs' are the best group of fans. Aren't we always being told that true fans support their local team – and league, come to think of it – whatever?

Turned back from Istanbul

In the November 2003 edition, you write on page 83 that 45 "known hooligans" were turned away at Istanbul airport prior to England's game against Turkey on October 11.

I was one of the 45 refused entry to Turkey, but it is the first time I've been described as a "known hooligan". I don't and have never had a criminal record for anything.

We'd purchased flight tickets 10 months before, prior to the FA's refusal of tickets. We explained to officials that the reason we were travelling was so as not to lose out on the flights.

We had every intention of going to the game as we'd purchased tickets from a Turkish friend. In fact, one of our party of three walked straight through and subsequently watched the game.

As for the rest of us, they took our passports and we were taken to a detention room within the airport. At most we numbered 24 in the one room. We were returned home 23 hours after arriving at the airport. Although we were fed, and visited by the British consulate, we were only told the reason for being denied entry as we boarded our flight home. Apparently, our names were on a Home Office list. A list of what I don't know.

I would like to stress I have never been in trouble for football or football related wrongdoings. In fact, I've never been in trouble with the law for anything.

Matt Woods, by e-mail

Gavin Hamilton replies: The name of every British passport holder entering Istanbul was checked against a list supplied by the British authorities – World Soccer, along with most other media, was led to believe by the authorities that the list contained the names of those either convicted or suspected of being involved in football-related violence.

Next Month in WORLD SOCCER

The results of the World Soccer Awards for World Player, Team and Manager of the Year

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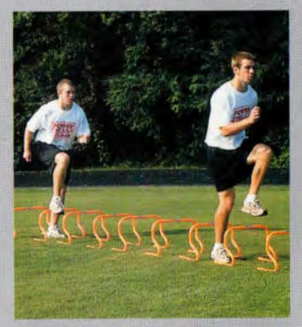
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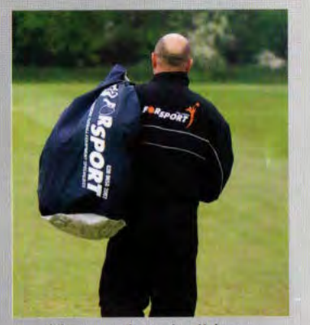
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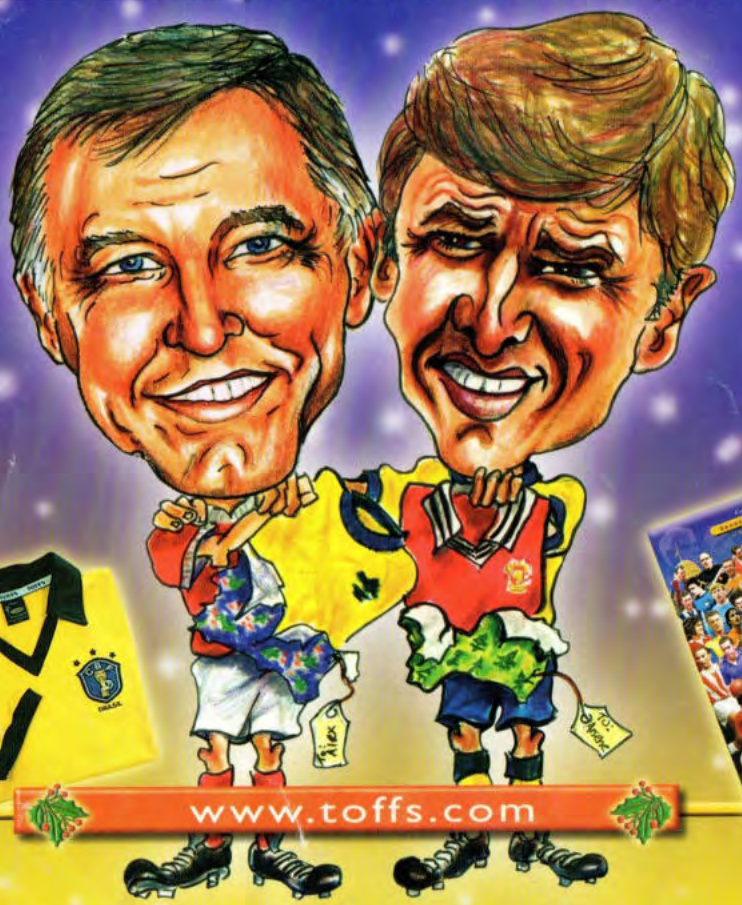

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